



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

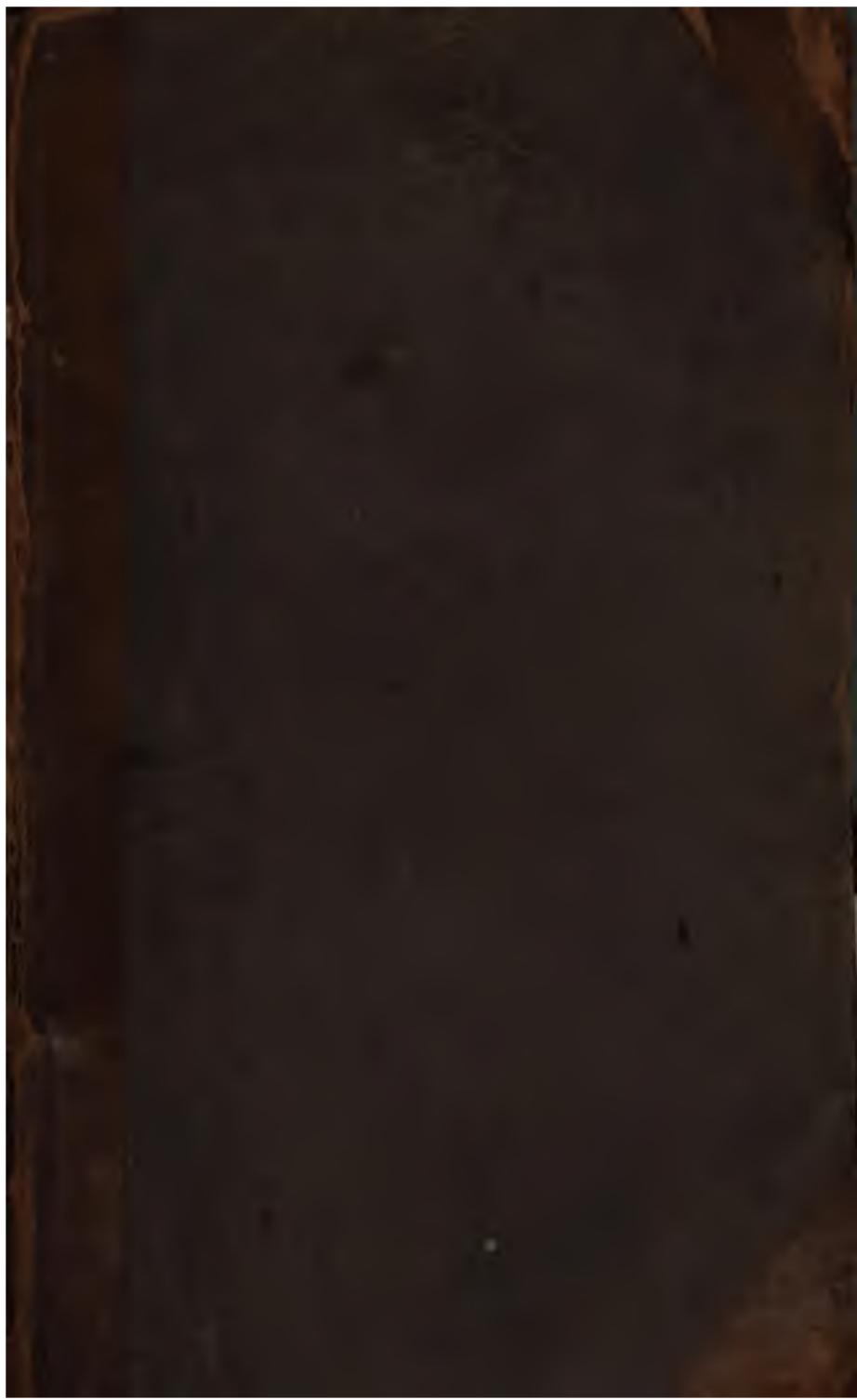
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



THIS BOOK BELONGS TO
Rowley's Circulating Library,
EDMONTON.

THE NEW PUBLICATIONS REGULARLY ADDED.

<i>Terms of Subscription.</i>	<i>£.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Yearly Subscribers at	1	1	0
Half Yearly Ditto.....	0	12	0
Quarterly Ditto.....	0	7	0
Monthly Ditto	0	3	0

*Will be accommodated with all the New Books,
Magazines, Reviews, &c.*

Subscribers by Year, 16s. Half-yearly ditto, 9s. Quarterly ditto, 5s.
are entitled to the Old Books, not exceeding an Octavo Size.

The Money to be paid at the time of subscribing.

NON - SUBSCRIBERS

Deposit the Value of the Book, if required, and pay

For each Vol. not exceeding the Value of Four Shillings, 2d.
Above Four, and not exceedingSeven Shillings, 3d.
Above Seven, and not exceedingTwelve Shillings, 4d.

The Proprietor earnestly requests that new Books will not be
detained more than Three Days.

 DRAWINGS LENT TO COPY.

* * * A great Variety of Fashionable Music.

Ivory Pin Cushions and Needle Cases, Card Racks and Screen
Handles, Cotton Boxes with an elegant assortment
of Fancy Goods.

Book-binding in all its Branches.

Stationery, Accompt Books ruled to any Pattern.

Drawing-paper, Bristol-boards, Paste-boards, Coloured and Fancy
Gold Paper, Gold Borders, &c. in the greatest Variety.

N. B. Large Libraries furnished
and re-arranged.
Periodical Pub-
lished.



THE
ADVENTURES
OF
Sir Launcelot Greaves.

BY THE AUTHOR OF RODERICK RANDOM.

A NEW EDITION, CORRECTED.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON,

PRINTED FOR G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1793.

249. 5. 588.



C O N T E N T S

OF THE

F I R S T V O L U M E.

C H A P. I

In which certain personages of this delightful history
are introduced into the reader's acquaintance. 1

C H A P. II.

In which the hero of these adventures makes his
first appearance on the stage of action. 18

C H A P. III.

Which the reader, on perusal, may wish were *Chap-*
ter the last. 42

C H A P. IV.

In which it appears that the knight, when heartily
set in for sleeping, was not easily disturbed. 75

C H A P. V.

In which this recapitulation draws to a close. 105

C H A P.

iv C O N T E N T S.

C H A P. XVIII.

- In which the rays of chivalry shine with renovated lustre. 113

C H A P. XIX.

- The adventures of the Knight of the Griffin and the Knight of the Crescent. 132

C H A P. XX.

- In which our hero descends into the mansions of the damned. 153

C H A P. XXI.

- Containing further anecdotes relating to the children of wretchedness. 170

C H A P. XXII.

- In which captain Crowe is sublimed into the regions of astrology. 192

C H A P. XXIII.

- In which the clouds that cover the catastrophe begin to disperse. 214

C H A P. XXIV.

- The knot that puzzles human wisdom, the hand of fortune sometimes will untie, familiar as her garter. 233

C H A P. XXV.

- Which, it is to be hoped, will be on more accounts than one, agreeable to the reader. 258

T H E

THE
A D V E N T U R E S
OF
Sir Launcelot Greaves.

C H A P. I.

In which certain personages of this delightful history are introduced to the reader's acquaintance.

IT was on the great northern road from York to London, about the beginning of the month October, and the hour of eight in the evening, that four travellers were by a violent shower of rain driven for shelter into a little public house on the side of the high-way, distinguished by a sign which was said to exhibit the figure of a Black Lion. The kitchen, in which they assembled, was the only room for entertainment in the house, paved with red bricks,

VOL. I.

B

re-

2 THE ADVENTURES OF

remarkably clean, furnished with three or four Windsor chairs, adorned with shining plates of pewter, and copper sauce-pans nicely scoured, that even dazzled the eyes of the beholder; while a cheerful fire of sea-coal blazed in the chimney. Three of the travellers, who arrived on horseback, having seen their cattle properly accommodated in the stable, agreed to pass the time, until the weather should clear up, over a bowl of rumbo, which was accordingly prepared: but the fourth, refusing to join their company, took his station at the opposite side of the chimney, and called for a pint of two-penny, with which he indulged himself apart. At a little distance, on his left hand, there was another groupe, consisting of the landlady, a decent widow, her two daughters, the elder of whom seemed to be about the age of fifteen, and a country lad, who served both as waiter and ostler.

The social triumvirate was composed of Mr. Fillet, a country practitioner in fur-

SIR LAUNCELOT GREAVES. 3

surgery and midwifery, capt. Crowe, and his nephew Mr. Thomas Clarke, an attorney. Fillet was a man of some education, and a great deal of experience, shrewd, sly, and sensible. Capt. Crow had commanded a merchant-ship in the Mediterranean-trade for many years, and saved some money by dint of frugality and traffic. He was an excellent seaman, brave, active, friendly in his way, and scrupulously honest; but as little acquainted with the world as a fucking child; whimsical, impatient, and so impetuous that he could not help breaking in upon the conversation, whatever it might be, with repeated interruptions, that seemed to burst from him by involuntary impulse: when he attempted to speak, he never finished his period; but made such a number of abrupt transitions, that his discourse seemed to be an unconnected series of unfinished sentences, the meaning of which it was not easy to decypher. His nephew, Tom Clarke, was a young fellow, whose goodness of heart even

4 THE ADVENTURES OF

the exercise of his profession had not been able to corrupt. Before strangers he never owned himself an attorney, without blushing, though he had no reason to blush for his own practice ; for he constantly refused to engage in the cause of any client whose character was equivocal, and was never known to act with such industry as when concerned for the widow and orphan, or any other object that sued *in forma pauperis*. Indeed he was so replete with human kindness, that as often as an affecting story or circumstance was told in his hearing, it overflowed at his eyes. Being of a warm complexion, he was very susceptible of passion, and somewhat libertine in his amours. In other respects, he piqued himself on understanding the practice of the courts, and in private company he took pleasure in laying down the law ; but he was an indifferent orator, and tediously circumstantial in his explanations : his stature was rather diminutive ; but, upon the whole, he had some title to the character of a pret-

a pretty, dapper, little fellow. The solitary guest had something very forbidding in his aspect, which was contracted by an habitual frown. His eyes were small and red, and so deep set in the sockets, that each appeared like the undistinguished snuff of a farthing candle, gleaming through the horn of a dark lanthorn. His nostrils were elevated in scorn, as if his sense of smelling had been perpetually offended by some unsavoury odour; and he looked as if he wanted to shrink within himself, from the impertinence of society. He wore a black periwig ~~as strait as the pinions of a raven,~~ covered with an hat flapped, and fastened to his head by a speckled handkerchief tied under his chin. He was wrapped in a great coat of brown frize, under which he seemed to conceal a small bundle. His name was Ferret, and his character distinguished by three peculiarities. He was never seen to smile: he was never heard to speak in praise of any person whatsoever; and he was never known to give a direct answer

6 THE ADVENTURES OF

to any question that was asked : but seemed, on all occasions, to be actuated by the most perverse spirit of contradiction.

Capt. Crowe, having remarked that it was squally weather, asked how far it was to the next market-town ; and understanding that the distance was not less than six miles, said he had a good mind to come to an anchor for the night, if so be as he could have a tolerable *berth* in this here harbour. Mr. Fillet, perceiving by his stile that he was a sea-faring gentleman, observed that their landlady was not used to lodge such company : and expressed some surprise, that he who had no doubt endured so many storms and hardships at sea, should think much of travelling five or six miles a horse-back by moon-light. “ For my part, said, he, I ride in all weathers, and at all hours, without minding cold, wet, wind, or darkness. My constitution is so *cafe*-hardened, that I believe I could live all the year at Spitzbergen. With respect to this road, I know every foot of it so exactly, that I'll engage

engage to travel forty miles upon it blind-fold, without making one false step; and if you have faith enough to put yourselves under my auspices, I will conduct you safe to an elegant inn, where you will meet with the best accommodation." "Thank you, brother, (replied the captain:) we are much beholden to you for your courteous offer; but, howsoever, you must not think I mind foul weather more than my neighbours. I have worked hard aloft and allow in many a taught gale—but this here is the case, d'ye see; we have run down a long ~~day's~~ reckoning: our beasts have had a hard spell; and as for my own ~~hap~~, brother, I doubt my bottom planks have lost some of their sheathing, being as how I a n't used to that kind of scrubbing."

The doctor, who had practised on board a man of war in his youth, and was perfectly well acquainted with the captain's dialect, assured him, that if the bottom was damaged, he would *new-pay* it with an

8 THE ADVENTURES OF

excellent salve, which he always carried about him, to guard against such accidents on the road: but Tom Clark, who seemed to have cast the eyes of affection upon the landlady's eldest daughter, Dolly, objected to their proceeding farther without rest and refreshment, as they had already travelled fifty miles since morning; and he was sure his uncle must be fatigued both in mind and body, from vexation as well as from a hard exercise, to which he had not been accustomed. Fillet then desisted, saying, he was sorry to find the captain had any cause for vexation; but he hoped it was not an incurable evil. This expression was accompanied with a look of curiosity, which Mr. Clark was glad of an occasion to gratify; for, as we have hinted above, he was a very communicative gentleman, and the affair which now lay upon his stomach interested him nearly. "I'll assure you, Sir, (said he) this here gentleman, captain Crowe, who is my mother's own brother, has been cruelly used by some
of

SIR LAUNCELOT GREAVES.

of his relations. He bears as good a character as any captain of a ship on the Royal Exchange, and has undergone a variety of hardships at sea. What d'ye think, now, of his bursting all his sinews, and making his eyes start out of his head, in pulling his ship off a rock, whereby he saved to his owners"—Here he was interrupted by the captain, who exclaimed, "Belay, Tom, belay:—prithee, don't veer out such a deal of jaw. Clap a stopper on thy cable, and bring thyself up, my lad.—What a deal of stuff thou hast pumped up concerning bursting and starting, and pulling ships, Laud have mercy upon us!—Look ye here, brother—look ye here—mind these poor crippled joints: two fingers on the starboard, and three on the larboard hand: crooked, d'ye see, like the knees of a blinder.—I'll tell you what, brother, you seem to be a—ship deep laden—rich cargo—current setting into the bay—hard gale—lee-shore—all hands in the boat—tow round the headland—self pulling for

10 THE ADVENTURES OF

dear blood, against the whole crew.—Snap go the finger-braces—crack went the eye-blocks.—Bounce day-light—flash-star-light—down I foundered, dark as hell—whizz went my ears, and my head spun like a whirligig.—That don't signify—I'm a Yorkshire boy, as the saying is—all my life at sea, brother, by reason of an old grandmother and maiden aunt, a couple of old stinking—kept me these forty years out of my grand-father's estate.—Hearing as how they had taken their departure, came ashore, hired horses, and clapped on all my canvas, steering to the northward, to take possession of my—But it don't signify talking—these two old piratical—had held a palaver with a lawyer—an attorney, Tom, d'ye mind me, an attorney—and by his assistance hove me out of my inheritance:—that is all, brother—hove me out of five hundred pounds a year—that's all—what signifies—but such windfalls we don't every day pick up along shore.—Fill about, brother—yes, by the Lord !
those

those two smuggling harridans, with the assistance of an attorney—an attorney, Tom —hove me out of five hundred a year.” “ Yes, indeed, Sir, (added Mr. Clark,) those two malicious old women docked the entail and left the estate to an alien.”

Here Mr. Ferret thought proper to intermingle in the conversation with a “ *Pifb*, what, do’st talk of docking the entail? Do’st not know that by the Statute Westm. 2. 13. Ed. the will and intention of the donor must be fulfilled, and the tenant in *tail* shall not alien after issue had, or before.” “ Give me leave, Sir, (replied Tom) I presume you are a practitioner in the law. Now you know, that in the case of a contingent *remainder*, the entail may be destroyed by levying a fine, and suffering a recovery; or otherwise destroying the particular estate, before the contingency happens. If *feoffees*, who possess an estate only during the life of a son, where divers *remainders* are limited over, make a *feoffment* in *fee* to him, by the *feoffment* all

12 THE ADVENTURES OF

the future *remainders* are destroyed. Indeed, a person in *remainder* may have a writ of intrusion, if any do intrude after the death of a tenant for life; and the writ *ex gravi querela* lies to execute a devise in *remainder*, after the death of tenant in tail without issue."—"Spoke like a true disciple of Geber," cries Ferret. "No, Sir, (replied Mr. Clarke) counsellor Caper is in the conveyancing-way—I was clerk to serjeant Croaker." "Ay, now you may set up for yourself; (resumed the other) for you can prate as unintelligibly as the best of them."

"Perhaps (said Tom) I do not make myself understood; if so be as how that is the case, let us change the position; and suppose that this here case is a *tail after a possibility of issue extinct*. If a tenant in tail, after a possibility, make a *feoffment* of his land, he in reversion may enter for the forfeiture. Then we must make a distinction between *general tail* and *special tail*. It is the word *body* that makes the *intail*:—there must

must be *body* in the *tail*, devised to heirs male or female, otherwise it is a fee-simple, because it is not limited of what *body*. Thus a corporation cannot be seized in *tail*. For example : here is a young women—What is your name, my dear ? “Dolly,” answered the daughter, with a curtsey. “Here’s Dolly—I seise Dolly in *tail*.—Dolly I seise you in *tail*”—“Sha’t then,” cried Dolly, pouting. “I am seised of land in fee—I settle on Dolly in *tail*.”—Dolly, who did not comprehend the nature of the illustration, understood him in a literal sense, and in a whimpering tone exclaimed, “Sha’t then, I tell thee, cursed tuoad!”—Tom, however, was so transported with his subject, that he took no notice of poor Dolly’s mistake ; but proceeded in his harangue upon the different kinds of *tails*, *remainders*, and *seisins*, when he was interrupted by a noise that alarmed the whole company. The rain had been succeeded by a storm of wind, that howled around the house with the most savage im-

petu-

petuosity ; and the heavens were overcast in such a manner, that not one star appeared ; so that all without was darkness and uproar. This aggravated the horror of divers loud screams, which even the noise of the blast could not exclude from the astonished ears of our travellers. Captain Crowe called out, “ Avast, avast :” Tom Clarke sat silent, staring wildly, with his mouth still open ; the surgeon himself seemed startled ; and Ferret’s countenance betrayed evident marks of confusion. The ostler moved nearer the chimney, and the good woman of the house, with her two daughters, crept close to the company.

After some pause, the captain starting up, “ These (said he) be signals of distress. Some poor souls in danger of foundering. —Let us bear up a-head, and see if we can give them any assistance.” The land-lady begged him, for Christis sake, not to think of going out ; for it was a spirit that would lead him astray into fens and rivers, and certainly do him a mischief. Crowe seemed

seemed to be staggered by this remonstrance, which his nephew reinforced, observing, that it might be a stratagem of rogues to decoy them into the fields, that they might rob them under cloud of night. Thus exhorted, he resumed his seat; and Mr. Ferret began to make very severe strictures upon the folly and fear of those who believed and trembled at the visitation of spirits, ghosts, and goblins. He said, he would engage with twelve penny-worth of phosphorus to frighten a whole parish out of their senses: then he expatiated on the pusillanimity of the nation in general; ridiculed the militia, censured the government; and dropped some hints about a change of hands, which the captain could not, and the doctor would not comprehend. Tom Clarke, from the freedom of his discourse, concluded he was a ministerial spy, and communicated his opinion to his uncle in a whisper, while this misanthrope continued to pour forth his invectives with a fluency peculiar to himself.

Truth

16 THE ADVENTURES OF

Truth is, Mr. Ferret had been a party-writer, not from principle, but employment, and had felt the rod of power ; in order to avoid a second exertion of which, he now found it convenient to sculk about in the country : for he had received intimation of a warrant from the secretary of state, who wanted to be better acquainted with his person. Notwithstanding the ticklish nature of his situation, it was become so habitual to him to think and speak in a certain manner, that even before strangers, whose principles and connexions he could not possibly know, he hardly ever opened his mouth, without uttering some direct or implied sarcasm against the government. He had already proceeded a considerable way in demonstrating, that the nation was bankrupt and beggared, and that those who stood at the helm were steering full into the gulph of inevitable destruction ; when his lecture was suddenly suspended by a violent knocking at the door, which threatened the whole house with immediate demolition.

tion. Capt. Crowe, believing they should be instantly boarded, unsheathed his hanger, and stood in a posture of defence. Mr. Fillet armed himself with the poker, which happened to be red-hot: the ostler pulled down a rusty firelock, that hung by the roof, over a flitch of bacon. Tom Clarke, perceiving the landlady and her children distracted with terror, conducted them, out of meer compassion, below stairs into the cellar; and as for Mr. Ferret, he prudently withdrew into an adjoining pantry. But as a personage of great importance in this entertaining history was forced to remain some time at the door, before he could gain admittance, so must the reader wait with patience for the next chapter, in which he will see the cause of this disturbance explained much to his comfort and edification.

C H A P. II.

In which the hero of these adventures makes his first appearance on the stage of action.

THE outward door of the Black Lion had already sustained two dreadful shocks ; but at the third it flew open, and in stalked an apparition, that smote the hearts of our travellers with fear and trepidation. It was the figure of a man armed cap-a-pie, bearing on his shoulder a bundle dropping with water, which afterwards appeared to be the body of a man that seemed to have been drowned, and fished up from the bottom of the neighbouring river. Having deposited his burthen carefully on the floor, he addressed himself to the company in these words : “ Be not surprised, good people, at this unusual appearance, which I shall take an opportunity to explain ; and forgive the rude and boisterous manner in which I have demanded, and indeed forced admittance.

The

The violence of my intrusion was the effect of necessity. In crossing the river, my squire and his horse were swept away by the stream; and with some difficulty I have been able to drag him ashore, though I am afraid my assistance reached him too late: for, since I brought him to land, he has given no signs of life."

Here he was interrupted by a groan, which issued from the chest of the squire, and terrified the spectators as much as it comforted the master. After some recollection, Mr. Fillet began to undress the body, which was laid in a blanket on the floor, and rolled from side to side by his direction. A considerable quantity of water being discharged from the mouth of this unfortunate squire, he uttered a hideous roar, and, opening his eyes, stared wildly around: then the surgeon undertook for his recovery; and his master went forth with the ostler in quest of the horses, which he had left by the side of the river.

His

20 THE ADVENTURES OF

His back was no sooner turned than Ferret, who had been peeping from behind the pantry-door, ventured to rejoin the company ; pronouncing with a smile, or rather grin of contempt, “ Hey-day ! what precious mummery is this ? What, are we to have the farce of Hamlet’s ghost ? ” “ Adzooks, (cried the captain) my kinsman Tom has dropped a-stern—hope in God a-has not bulged to, and gone to bottom.” “ Pish, (exclaimed the misanthrope) there’s is no danger : the young lawyer is only seising Dolly in tail.”

Certain it is, Dolly squeaked at that instant in the cellar ; and Clarke appearing soon after in some confusion, declared she had been frightened by a flash of lightning : but this assertion was not confirmed by the young lady herself, who eyed him with a sullen regard, indicating displeasure, though not indifference ; and when questioned by her mother, replied, “ A-doan’t maind what a-says, so a-doan’t, vor all his goal-den jacket, then.”

In

SIR LAUNCELOT GREAVES. 21

In the mean time the surgeon had performed the operation of phlebotomy on the squire, who was lifted into a chair, and supported by the landlady for that purpose ; but he had not as yet given any sign of having retrieved the use of his senses. And here Mr. Fillet could not help contemplating, with surprize, the strange figure and accoutrements of his patient, who seemed in age to be turned of fifty. His stature was below the middle size : he was thick, squat, and brawny, with a small protuberance on one shoulder, and a prominent belly, which, in consequence of the water he had swallowed, now strutted beyond its usual dimensions. His forehead was remarkably convex, and so very low, that his black bushy hair descended within an inch of his nose : but this did not conceal the wrinkles of his front, which were manifold. His small glimmering eyes resembled those of the Hampshire porker, that turns up the foil with his projecting snout. His cheeks were shrivelled and

22 THE ADVENTURES OF

puckered at the corners, like the seams of a regimental coat as it comes from the hands of the contractor: his nose bore a strong analogy in shape to a tennis-ball, and in colour to a mulberry; for all the water of the river had not been able to quench the natural fire of that feature. His upper jaw was furnished with two long white sharp-pointed teeth or fangs, such as the reader may have observed in the chaps of a wolf, or full-grown mastiff, and an anatomist would describe as a preternatural elongation of the *dentes canini*. His chin was so long, so peaked, and incurvated, as to form in profile with his impending forehead the exact resemblance of a moon in the first quarter. With respect to his equipage, he had a leathern cap upon his head, faced like those worn by marines, and exhibiting in embroidery the figure of a crescent. His coat was of white cloth faced with black, and cut in a very antique fashion; and, in lieu of a waistcoat, he wore a buff jerkin. His feet

were cased with loose buskins, which, though they rose almost to his knee, could not hide that curvature known by the appellation of bandy legs. A large string of bandoliers garnished a broad belt that graced his shoulders, from whence depended an instrument of war, which was something between a back-sword and a cut-las; and a case of pistols were stuck in his girdle. Such was the figure which the whole company now surveyed with admiration. After some pause, he seemed to recover his recollection. He rolled his eyes around, and, attentively surveying every individual, exclaimed, in a strange tone, “ Bodikins ! where’s Gilbert ?” This interrogation did not favour much of sanity, especially when accompanied with a wild stare, which is generally interpreted as a sure sign of a disturbed understanding : nevertheless, the surgeon endeavoured to assist his recollection.—“ Come, (said he) have a good-heart.—How do’st do, friend ?” “ Do ! (replied

24 THE ADVENTURES OF

replied the squire) do as well as I can:— that's a lie too: I might have done better. I had no business to be here.” “ You ought to thank God and your master (resumed the surgeon) for the providential escape you have had.” “ Thank my master! (cried the squire) thank the devil! Go and teach your grannum to crack filberds. I know who I'm bound to pray for, and who I ought to curse the longest day I have to live.”

Here the Captain interposing, “ Nay, brother, (said he) you are bound to pray for this here gentleman as your sheet-anchor: for, if so be as he had not cleared your stowage of the water you had taken in at your upper works, and lightened your veins, d'ye see, by taking away some of your blood, adad! you had driven before the gale, and never been brought up in this world again, d'ye see.” “ What, then you would persuade me (replied the patient) that the only way to save my life was to shed my precious blood?

Look

Look ye, friend, it shall not be lost blood to me.—I take you all to witness, that there surgeon, or apothecary, or farrier, or dog-doctor, or whatsoever he may be, has robbed me of the balsam of life :—he has not left so much blood in my body as would fatten a starved flea.—O ! that there was a lawyer here to serve him with a *fiferari*.” Then fixing his eyes upon Ferret, he proceeded : “ An’t you a limb of the law, friend ?—No, I cry you mercy, you look more like a shew-man or a conjurer.”— Ferret, nettled at this address, answered, “ It would be well for you that I could conjure a little common sense into that numbscull of yours.”—“ If I want that commodity, (rejoined the squire) I must go to another market, I trow.—You legerdemain men be more like to conjure the money from our pockets, than sense into our sculls.—Vor my own part, I was once cheated of vorty good shillings by one of your broother cups and balls.” In all probability he would have descended to

26 THE ADVENTURES OF

particulars, had not he been seized with a return of his nausea, which obliged him to call for a bumper of brandy. This remedy being swallowed, the tumult in his stomach subsided. He desired he might be put to bed without delay, and that half a dozen eggs and a pound of bacon might, in a couple of hours, be dressed for his supper.

He was accordingly led off the scene by the landlady and her daughter; and Mr. Ferret had just time to observe the fellow was a composition, in which he did not know whether knave or fool most predominated, when the master returned from the stable. He had taken off his helmet, and now displayed a very engaging countenance. His age did not seem to exceed thirty: he was tall and seemingly robust; his face long and oval, his nose aquiline, his mouth furnished with a set of elegant teeth white as the drifted snow; his complexion clear, and his aspect noble. His chestnut hair loosely flowed in short natural curls;

curls ; and his grey eyes shone with such vivacity, as plainly shewed that his reason was a little discomposed. Such an appearance prepossessed the greater part of the company in his favour : he bowed round with the most polite and affable address ; enquired about his squire ; and, being informed of the pains Mr. Fillet had taken for his recovery, insisted upon that gentleman's accepting an handsome gratuity : then, in consideration of the cold bath he had undergone, he was prevailed upon to take the post of honour ; namely, the great chair fronting the fire, which was reinforced with a billet of wood for his comfort and convenience.

Perceiving his fellow-travellers either over-awed into silence by his presence, or struck dumb with admiration at his equipage, he accosted them in these words, while an agreeable smile dimpled on his cheek.

"The good company wonders, no doubt,
to see a man cased in armour, such as

28 THE ADVENTURES OF

hath been for above a whole century diffused in this and every other country of Europe ; and perhaps they will be still more surprised, when they hear that man professes himself a novice of that military order, which hath of old been distinguished in Great-Britain, as well as through all Christendom, by the name of Knights Errant. Yes, gentlemen, in that painful and thorny path of toil and danger I have begun my career, a candidate for honest fame ; determined, as far as in me lies, to honour and assert the efforts of virtue ; to combat vice in all her forms, redress injuries, chastise oppression, protect the helpless and forlorn, relieve the indigent, exert my best endeavours in the cause of innocence, and beauty, and dedicate my talents, such as they are, to the service of my country.” “ What ! (said Ferret) you set up for a modern Don Quixote ?—The scheme is rather too stale and extravagant.—What was an humorous romance, and well-timed satire in Spain, near two hundred years ago,

ago, will make but a sorry jest, and appear equally insipid and absurd, when really acted from affectation, at this time a-day, in a country like England."

The Knight, eying this censor with a look of disdain, replied, in a solemn lofty tone : " He that from affectation imitates the extravagancies recorded of Don Quixote, is an impostor equally wicked and contemptible. He that counterfeits madness, unless he dissembles like the elder Brutus, for some virtuous purpose, not only debases his own soul, but acts as a traitor to heaven, by denying the divinity that is within him—I am neither an affected imitator of Don Quixote, nor, I trust in heaven, visited by that spirit of lunacy so admirably displayed in the fictitious character exhibited by the inimitable Cervantes. I have not yet encountered a windmill for a giant; nor mistaken this public house for a magnificent castle: neither do I believe this gentleman to be the

30 THE ADVENTURES OF

constable ; nor that worthy practitioner to be master Elizabat, the surgeon recorded in Amadis de Gaul ; nor you to be the enchanter Alquife, nor any other sage of history or romance.—I see and distinguish objects as they are discerned and described by other men. I reason without prejudice, can endure contradiction, and, as the company perceives, even bear impertinent censure without passion or resentment. I quarrel with none but the foes of virtue and decorum, against whom I have declared perpetual war, and them I will every where attack as the natural enemies of mankind.” “ But that war (said the cynic) may soon be brought to a conclusion, and your adventures close in Bride-well, provided you meet with some determined constable, who will seize your worship as vagrant, according to the statute.” “ Heaven and earth ! (cried the stranger, starting up and laying his hand to his sword) do I lie to hear myself insulted with such

an

SIR LAUNCELOT GREAVES.

an opprobrious epithet, and refrain from trampling into dust the insolent calumniator !”

The tone in which these words were pronounced, and the indignation that flashed from the eyes of the speaker, intimidated every individual of the society, and reduced Ferret to a temporary privation of all his faculties. His eyes retired within their sockets : his complexion, which was naturally of a copper hue, now shifted to a leaden colour ; his teeth began to chatter ; and all his limbs were agitated by a sudden palsy. The Knight observed his condition, and resumed his seat, saying, “ I was to blame : my vengeance must be reserved for very different objects. — Friend, you have nothing to fear — the sudden gust of passion is now blown over. Recollect yourself, and I will reason calmly on the observation you have made.”

This was a very seasonable declaration to Mr. Ferret, who opened his eyes, and wiped his forehead, while the other pro-

32 THE ADVENTURES OF

ceeded in these terms. " You say I am in danger of being apprehended as a vagrant : I am not so ignorant of the laws of my country, but that I know the description of those who fall within the legal meaning of this odious term. You must give me leave to inform you, friend, that I am neither bearward, fencer, stroller, gipsey, mountebank, nor mendicant ; nor do I practise subtle craft to deceive and impose on the King's lieges ; nor can I be held as an idle disorderly person, travelling from place to place, collecting monies by virtue of counterfeited passes, briefs, and other false pretences.—In what respect therefore am I to be deemed a vagrant ? Answer boldly, without fear or scruple." To this interrogation the misanthrope replied, with a faltering accent, " If not a vagrant, you incur the penalty for riding armed in affray of the peace." " But, instead of riding armed in affray of the peace, (resumed the other) I ride in preservation of the peace ; and gentlemen are allowed by

by the law to wear armour for their defence. Some ride with blunderbusses, some with pistols, some with swords, according to their various inclinations. Mine is to wear the armour of my forefathers: perhaps I use them for exercise, in order to accustom myself to fatigue, and strengthen my constitution: perhaps I assume them for a frolick."

"But if you swagger armed and in disguise, assault me on the highway, or put me in bodily fear, for the sake of the jest, the law will punish you in earnest," (cried the other.) "But my intention (answered the Knight) is carefully to avoid all those occasions of offences." "Then (said Ferret) you may go unarmed, like other sober people." "Not so, (answered the Knight) as I propose to travel all times, and in all places, mine' armour may guard me against the attempts of treachery: it may defend me in combat against odds, should I be assaulted by a multitude of plebeians, or

§4 THE ADVENTURES OF

have occasion to bring malefactors to justice." "What, then (exclaimed the philosopher) you intend to co-operate with the honourable fraternity of thief-takers;" "I do purpose (said the youth, eying him with a look of ineffable contempt) to act as a coadjutor to the law, and even to remedy evils which the law cannot reach; to detect fraud and treason, abase insolence, mortify pride, discourage slander, disgrace immodesty, and stigmatize ingratitude: but the infamous part of a thief-catcher's character I disclaim. I neither associate with robbers and pickpockets, knowing them to be such; that, in being intrusted with their secrets, I may the more effectually betray them; nor shall I ever pocket the reward granted by the legislature to those by whom robbers are brought to conviction: but I shall always think it my duty to rid my country of that pernicious vermin, which preys upon the bowels of the commonwealth—not but that

that an incorporated company of licensed thieves might, under proper regulations, be of service to the community."

Ferret, emboldened by the passive tame-ness with which the stranger bore his last reflection, began to think he had nothing of Hector but his outside, and gave a loose to all the acrimony of his party-rancour. Hearing the Knight mention a company of licensed thieves, "What else (cried he) is the majority of the nation? What is your standing army at home, that eat up their fellow-subjects? What are your mercenaries abroad, whom you hire to fight their own quarrels? What is your militia, that wise measure of this sagacious m—ry, but a larger gang of petty thieves, who steal sheep and poultry through mere idleness; and were they confronted with an enemy, would steal themselves away? What is your but a knot of thieves, who pillage the nation under colour of law, and enrich themselves with the wreck of their country? When you consider the

36 THE ADVENTURES OF .

enormous debt of an hundred millions, the intolerable load of taxes and impositions under which we groan, and the manner in which that burthen is yearly accumulating, to support two German electorates, without our receiving any thing in return but the shews of triumph and shadows of conquest : I say, when you reflect on these circumstances, and at the same time behold our cities filled with bankrupts, and our country with beggars ; can you be so infatuated as to deny that our m—y is mad, or worse than mad ; our wealth exhausted, our people miserable, our credit blasted, and our state on the brink of perdition ?—This prospect, indeed, will make the fainter impression, if we recollect that we ourselves are a pack of such profligate, corrupted, pusillanimous rascals, as deserve no salvation.”

The stranger, raising his voice to a loud tone, replied, “ Such, indeed, are the insinuations, equally false and insidious, with which the desperate emissaries
of

of a party endeavour to poison the minds of his Majesty's subjects, in defiance of common honesty and common sense. But he must be blind to all perception, and dead to candour, who does not see and own that we are involved in a just and necessary war, which has been maintained on truly British principles, prosecuted with vigour, and crowned with success ; that our taxes are easy in proportion to our wealth ; that our conquests are equally glorious and important ; that our commerce flourishes, our people are happy, and our enemies reduced to despair.—Is there a man who boasts a British heart, that repines at the success and prosperity of his country ? Such there are, O' shame to patriotism, and reproach to Great-Britain ! who act as the emissaries of France both in word and writing ; who exaggerate our necessary burthens, magnify our dangers, extol the power of our enemies, deride our victories, exquate our conquests, condemn the measures of our government, and scatter the seeds

38 THE ADVENTURES OF

seeds of dissatisfaction through the land. Such domestic traitors are doubly the objects of detestation; first, in perverting truth; and, secondly, in propagating falsehood, to the prejudice of that community of which they have professed themselves members. One of these is well known by the name of Ferret, an old, rancorous, incorrigible instrument of sedition: happy it is for him, that he has never fallen in my way; for, notwithstanding the maxims of forbearance which I have adopted, the indignation which the character of that caitiff inspires, would probably impel me to some act of violence, and I should crush him like an ungrateful viper, that gnawed the bosom which warmed it into life!"

These last words were pronounced with a wildness of look, that even bordered upon frenzy. The misanthrope once more retired to the pantry for shelter, and the rest of the guests were evidently disconcerted.

Mr. Fillet, in order to change the conversation, which was likely to produce serious

rious consequences, expressed uncommon satisfaction at the remarks which the Knight had made, signified his approbation of the honourable office he had undertaken; declared himself happy in having seen such an accomplished cavalier; and observed, that nothing was wanting to render him a complete knight-errant, but some celebrated beauty, the mistress of his heart, whose ideas might animate his breast, and strengthen his arm to the utmost exertion of valour: he added, that love was the soul of chivalry. The stranger started at this discourse. He turned his eyes on the surgeon with a fixed regard: his countenance changed: a torrent of tears gushed down his cheeks: his head sunk upon his bosom: he heaved a profound sigh; and remained in silence with all the external marks of unutterable sorrow. The company were in some measure infected by his despondence; concerning the cause of which, however, they would not venture to inquire.

By

40 THE ADVENTURES OF

By this time the landlady, having disposed of the squire, desired to know, with many curtsies, if his honour would not chuse to put off his wet garments ; assuring him, that she had a very good feather-bed at his service, upon which many gentlefolks of the virst quality had lain ; that the sheets were well aired ; and that Dolly should warm them for his worship with a pan of coals. This hospitable offer being repeated, he seemed to wake from a trance of grief ; arose from his seat, and, bowing courteously to the company, withdrew.

Captain Crowe, whose faculty of speech had been all this time absorbed in amazement, now broke into the conversation with a volley of interjections : “ Split my snatchblock !—Odd’s firkin !—Splice my old shoes !—I have sailed the salt seas, brother, since I was no higher than the Triton’s taffril — east, west, north, and south, as the saying is—Blacks, Indians, Moors, Morattos, and Seapoys ; — but, smite my timbers ! such a man of war.”—

Here

Here he was interrupted by his nephew Tom Clarke, who had disappeared at the Knight's first entrance, and now produced himself with an eagerness in his look, while the tears started in his eyes.—“Lord bless my soul! (cried he) I know that gentleman, and his servant, as well as I know my own father.—I am his own godson, uncle: he stood for me when he was a boy—yes, indeed, Sir, my father was steward to the estate—I may say I was bred up in the family of Sir Everhard Greaves, who has been dead these two years—this is the only son, Sir Launcelot; the best-natured, worthy, generous gentleman—I care not who knows it: I love him as well as if he was my own flesh and blood.”—

At this period Tom, whose heart was of the melting mood, began to sob and weep plenteously, from pure affection. Crowe, who was not very subject to these tendernesses, damned him for a chicken-hearted lubber; repeating, with much peevish-

42 THE ADVENTURES OF

peevishness, “ What do’st cry for ? What do’st cry for, noddy ? ” The surgeon, impatient to know the story of Sir Launcelot, which he had heard imperfectly recounted, begged that Mr. Clarke would compose himself, and relate it as circumstantially as his memory could retain the particulars ; and Tom, wiping his eyes, promised to give him that satisfaction ; which the reader, if he be so minded, may partake in the next chapter.

C H A P. III.

*Which the reader, on perusal, may wish were
chapter the last.*

THE Doctor prescribed a *repetatur* of the julep, and mixed the ingredients *secundem artem* ; Tom Clarke hemmed thrice, to clear his pipes ; while the rest of the company, including Dolly and her mother, who had by this time administered to the knight, composed themselves into earnest and hushed attention. Then,

the young lawyer began his narration to this effect:—" I tell ye what, gemmen, I don't pretend in this here case to flourish and harangue like a——having never been called to—but what of that, d'ye see?—perhaps I may know as much as——Facts are facts, as the saying is.—I shall tell, repeat, and relate a plain story—matters of fact, d'ye see, without rheroric, oratory, ornament, or embellishment; without repetition, tautology, circumlocution, or going about the bush: facts which I shall aver, partly on the testimony of my own knowledge, and partly from the information of responsible evidences of good repute and credit, any circumstance known to the contrary notwithstanding:—for, as the law saith, if so be as how there is *an exception* to evidence, that *exception* is in its nature but a denial of what is taken to be good by the other party, and *exceptio in non exceptis, firmat regulam*, d'ye see:—But, howsomever, in regard to this here affair, we need not be so scrupulous as if we were

44 THE ADVENTURES OF

were pleading before a judge *sedente curia.*"—

Ferret, whose curiosity was rather more eager than that of any other person in this audience, being provoked by this preamble, dashed the pipe he had just filled in pieces against the grate ; and, after having pronounced the interjection *pifß*, with an acrimony of aspect altogether peculiar to himself, " If (said he) impertinence and folly were felony by the statute, there would be no want of unexceptionable evidence to hang such an eternal babbler."

" Anan, babbler ! (cried Tom, reddening with passion, and starting up) I'd have you to know, Sir, that I can bite as well as babble ; and that, if I am so minded, I can run upon the foot after my game without being in fault, as the saying is ; and, which is more, I can shake an old fox by the collar."

How far this young lawyer might have proceeded to prove himself staunch on the person of the misanthrope, if he had not been

been prevented, we shall not determine ; but the whole company were alarmed at his looks and his expressions. Dolly's rosy cheeks assumed an ash-colour, while she ran between the disputants, crying, “ Naay, naay—vor the love of God doan't then, doan't !” But captain Crowe exerted a parental authority over his nephew, saying, *Avaft, Tom, avaft !—Snugg's the word—*we'll have no boarding, d'ye see.—Haul forward thy chair again, take thy berth, and proceed with thy story in a direct course, without yawning like a Dutch yank.”

Tom, thus tutored, recollected himself, resumed his seat, and, after some pause, plunged at once into the current of narration. “ I told you before, gemmen, that the gentleman in armour was the only son of Sir Everhard Greaves, who possessed a free estate of five thousand a year in our county, and was respected by all his neighbours, as much for his personal merit as for his family-fortune. With respect to his

46 THE ADVENTURES OF

son Launcelot, whom you have seen, I can remember nothing until he returned from the university, about the age of seventeen, and then I myself was not more than ten years old. The young gemman was at that time in mourning for his mother; though God he knows, Sir Everhard had more cause to rejoice than to be afflicted at her death:—for, among friends, (here he lowered his voice, and look round the kitchen) she was very whimsical, expensive, and ill-tempered, and, I'm afraid, a little —upon the—— flighty order—— a little touched or so;—but mum for that—the lady is now dead; and it is my maxim, *de mortuis nil nisi bonum.* The young squire was even then very handsome, and looked remarkably well in his weepers: but he had an awkward air and shambling gait, stooped mortally, and was so shy and silent, that he would not look a stranger in the face, nor open his mouth before company. Whenever he spied a horse or carriage at the gate, he would make his escape into

SIR LAUNCELOT GREAVES. 47

the garden, and from thence into the park ; where many's the good time and often he has been found sitting under a tree, with a book in his hand, reading Greek, Latin, and other foreign linguaſ.

Sir Everhard himself was no great ſcholar, and my father had forgot his classical learning ; and ſo the rector of the parish was desired to examine young Launcelot. It was a long time before he found an opportunity : the ſquire always gave him the ſlip. At length the parſon catched him iſ bed of a morning, and, locking the door, to it they went tooth and nail. What paſſed betwixt them the Lord in heaven knows ; but, when the Doctor came forth, he looked wild and haggard as if he had ſeen a ghost, his face as white as paper, and his lips trembling like an aspen-leaf. “ Parſon, (ſaid the knight) what is the matter ?—how doſt find my ſon ? I hope he won’t turn out a ninny, and diſgrace his family.” The Doctor, wiping the sweat from his forehead, replied, with ſome heſitation,

48 THE ADVENTURES OF

tation, “ he could not tell—he hoped the best—the squire was to be sure a very extraordinary young gentleman”—But the father urging him to give an explicit answer, he frankly declared, that, in his opinion, the son would turn out either a mirror of wisdom, or a monument of folly : for his genius and disposition were altogether preternatural. The knight was sorely vexed at this declaration, and signified his displeasure by saying, the doctor, like a true priest, dealt in mysteries and oracles, that would admit of different and indeed contrary interpretations. He afterwards consulted my father, who had served as steward upon the estate for above thirty years, and acquired a considerable share of his favour. “ Will. Clarke, (said he, with tears in his eyes) what shall I do with this unfortunate lad ? I would to God he had never been born ; for I fear he will bring my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. When I am gone, he will throw away the estate, and bring himself to infamy and ruin

ruin by keeping company with rooks and beggars.—O Will! I could forgive extravagance in a young man; but it breaks my heart to see my only son give such repeated proofs of a mean spirit and sordid disposition!"

Here the old gentleman shed a flood of tears, and not without some shadow of reason. By this time Launcelot was grown so reserved to his father, that he seldom saw him, or any of his relations, except when he was in a manner forced to appear at table, and there his bashfulness seemed every day to increase. On the other hand, he had formed some very strange connexions. Every morning he visited the stable, where he not only conversed with the grooms and helpers, but scraped acquaintance with the horses: he fed his favourites with his own hand, stroaked, caressed, and rode them by turns; till at last they grew so familiar, that, even when they were at grass, and saw him at a distance, they would toss their manes, whinny like so many colts at

50 THE ADVENTURES OF

fight of the dam, and galloping up to the place where he stood, smell him all over.

— You must know that I myself, though a child, was his companion in all these excursions. He took a liking to me on account of my being his godson, and gave me more money than I knew what to do with : he had always plenty of cash for the asking, as my father was ordered to supply him liberally, the knight thinking that a command of money might help to raise his thoughts to a proper consideration of his own importance. He never could endure a common beggar, that was not either in a state of infancy or of old age : but, in other respects, he made the guineas fly in such a manner, as looked more like madness than generosity. He had no communication with your rich yeomen ; but rather treated them and their families with studied contempt, because forsooth they pretended to assume the dress and manners of the gentry : they kept their footmen, their saddle-horses, and chaises : their wives and

and daughters appeared in their jewels, their silks, and their satins, their negligees and trollopees : their clumsy shanks, like so many shins of beef, were cased in silk-hose and embroidered slippers : their raw red fingers, gross as the pipes of a chamber-organ, which had been employed in milking the cows, in twirling the mop or churn-staff, being adorned with diamonds, were taught to thrum the pandola, and even to touch the keys of the harpsichord: nay, in every village they kept a rout and set up an assembly ; and in one place a hog-butcher was master of the ceremonies. I have heard Mr. Greaves ridicule them for their vanity and awkward imitation; and therefore, I believe, he avoided all concerns with them, even when they endeavoured to engage his attention. It was the lower sort of people with whom he chiefly conversed, such as ploughmen, ditchers, and other day-labourers. To every cottager in the parish he was a bounteous benefactor. He was, in the

52 THE ADVENTURES OF

literal sense of the word, a careful overseer of the poor; for he went from house to house, industriously inquiring into the distresses of the people. He repaired their huts, cloathed their backs, filled their bellies, and supplied them with necessaries for exercising their industry and different occupations.

I'll give you one instance now, as a specimen of his character. He and I strolling one day on the side of a common, saw two boys picking hips and haws from the hedges, one seemed to be about five, and the other a year older: they were both barefoot and ragged; but at the same time fat, fair, and in good condition. "Who do you belong to?" (said Mr. Greaves.) To Mary Stile, (replied the oldest) the widow that rents one of them houses." "And how do'st live, my boy? Thou lookest fresh and jolly;" resumed the squire. "Lived well enough till yesterday," answered the child. "And pray what happened yesterday, my boy?" continued Mr. Greaves. "Happened!

pened ! (said he) why, mammy had a coouple of little Welch keawes, that gi'en milk enough to fill all our bellies ; mammy's, and mine, and Dick's here, and my two little sisters at hoam : yesterday the squire seized the keawes for rent, God rot'un ! Mammy's gone to bed sick and sulky : my two sisters be crying at hoam vor vood ; and Dick and I be come hither to pick haws and bullies."

My godfather's face grew red as scarlet : he took one of the children in either hand, and leading them towards the house, found Sir Everhard talking with my father before the gate. Instead of avoiding the old gentleman, as usual, he brushed up to him with a spirit he had never shewn before, and presenting the two ragged boys, " Surely, Sir, (said he) you will not countenance that ruffian your steward, in oppressing the widow and the fatherless. On pretence of distraining for the rent of a cottage, he has robbed the mother of these and other poor infant-orphans of two

cows, which afforded them their whole sustenance. Shall you be concerned in tearing the hard-earned morsel from the mouth of indigence? Shall your name, which has been so long mentioned as a blessing, be now detested as a curse by the poor, the helpless, and forlorn? The father of these babes was once your game-keeper, who died of a consumption caught in your service.—You see they are almost naked—I found them plucking haws and sloes, in order to appease their hunger.—The wretched mother is starving in a cold cottage, distracted with the cries of other two infants, clamorous for food; and while her heart is bursting with anguish and despair, she invokes heaven to avenge the widow's cause upon the head of her unrelenting landlord!"

This unexpected address brought tears into the eyes of the good old gentleman.
" Will. Blake, (said he to my father) how durst you abuse my authority at this rate? You who know I have been always a protector,

tector, not an oppressor of the needy and unfortunate. I charge you, go immediately and comfort this poor woman with immediate relief: instead of her own cows, let her have two of the best milch cows of my dairy: they shall graze in my parks in summer, and be foddered with my hay in winter.—She shall sit rent free for life; and I will take care of these her poor orphans."

This was a very affecting scene. Mr. Launcelot took his father's hand and kissed it, while the tears ran down his cheeks; and Sir Everhard embraced his son with great tenderness, crying, " My dear boy ! God be praised for having given you such a feeling heart." My father himself was moved, thof a practitioner of the law, and consequently used to distresses.—He declared, that he had given no directions to distrain; and that the bailiff must have done it by his own authority.—" If that be the case (said the young squire) let

the inhuman rascal be turned out of our service."

Well, gemmen, the children were immediately cloathed and fed, and the poor widow was almost distracted with joy. The old knight, being of a humane temper himself, was pleased to see such proofs of his son's generosity: he was not angry at his spending his money, but at squandering away his time among the dregs of the people. For you must know, he not only made matches, portioned poor maidens, and set up young couples that came together without money; but he mingled in every rustic diversion, and bore away the prize in every contest. He excelled every swain of that district in feats of strength and activity; in leaping, running, wrestling, cricket, cudgel-playing, and pitching the bar; and was confessed to be, out of sight, the best dancer at all wakes and holidays: happy was the country-girl who could engage the young squire as her partner!

partner! To be sure it was a comely sight for to see as how the buxom country-lasses, fresh and fragrant, and blushing like the rose, in their best apparel dight, their white hose, and clean short dimity petticoats, their gaudy gowns of printed cotton; their top-knots, kissing-strings, and stomachers, bedizened with bunches of ribbons of various colours, green, pink, and yellow; to see them crowned with garlands, and assembled on May-day, to dance before squire Launcelot, as he made his morning's progress through the village. Then all the young peasants made their appearance with cockades, suited to the fancies of their several sweet-hearts, and boughs of flowering hawthorn. The children sported about the flocks of frisking lambs, or the young fry swarming under the sunny bank of some meandering river. The old men and women, in their holiday-garments, stood at their doors to receive their benefactor, and poured forth blessings on him as he passed: the children welcomed

58 THE ADVENTURES OF

him with their shrill shouts; the damsels with songs of praise; and the young men with the pipe and tabor marched before him to the May-pole, which was bedecked with flowers and bloom. There the rural dance began: a plentiful dinner, with oceans of good liquor, was bespoke at the White Hart: the whole village was regaled at the squire's expence; and both the day and the night was spent in mirth and pleasure. Lord help you! he could not rest if he thought there was an aching heart in the whole parish. Every poultry cottage was in a little time converted into a pretty snug, comfortable habitation, with a wooden porch at the door, glafs casements in the windows, and a little garden behind well stored with greens, roots, and fallads. In a word, the poor's rate was reduced to a meer trifle, and one would have thought the golden age was revived in Yorkshire.

But, as I told you before, the old knight could not bear to see his only son so wholly attached

attached to these lowly pleasures, while he industriously shunned all opportunities of appearing in that superior sphere to which he was designed by nature and by fortune. He imputed his conduct to meanness of spirit, and advised with my father touching the properest expedient to wean his affections from such low-born pursuits. My father counselled him to send the young gentleman up to London, to be entered as a student in the Temple, and recommended to the superintendance of some person who knew the town, and might engage him insensibly in such amusements and connexions, as would soon lift his ideas above the humble objects on which they had been hitherto employed. This advice appeared so salutary, that it was followed without the least hesitation. The young squire himself was perfectly well satisfied with the proposal, and in a few days set out for the great city: but there was not a dry eye in the parish at his departure, although he prevailed upon his father to

60 THE ADVENTURES OF

pay in his absence all the pensions he had granted to those who could not live on the fruit of their own industry. In what manner he spent his time at London, it is none of my busines to inquire ; thof I know pretty well what kind of lives are led by gemmen of your Inns of Court.—I myself once belonged to Serjeant's Inn, and was perhaps as good a wit and a critick as any Templar of them all. Nay, as for that matter, thof I despise vanity, I can aver with a safe conscience, that I had once the honour to belong to the soiety called *the Town* : we were all of us attorney's clerks, gemmen, and had our meetings at an ale-house in Butcher-row, where we regulated the diversions of the theatre.

But to return from this digression : Sir Everhard Greaves did not seem to be very well pleased with the conduct of his son at London. He got notice of some irregularities and scrapes into which he had fallen ; and the squire seldom wrote to his father, except to draw upon him for money, which

SIR LAUNCELOT GREAVES. 61

which he did so fast, that in eighteen months the old gemman lost all patience.

At this period squire Darnel chanced to die, leaving an only daughter, a minor, heiress of three thousand a year, under the guardianship of her uncle Anthony, whose brutal character all the world knows. The breath was no sooner out of his brother's body than he resolved, if possible, to succeed him in parliament as representative for the borough of Ashenton. Now you must know, that this borough had been for many years a bone of contention between the families of Greaves and Darnel; and at length the difference was compromised by the interposition of friends, on condition that Sir Everhard and squire Darnel should alternately represent the place in parliament. They agreed to this compromise for their mutual convenience; but they were never heartily reconciled. Their political principles did not tally; and their wives looked upon each other as
rivals

rivals in fortune and magnificence: so that there was no intercourse between them, thof they lived in the same neighbourhood. On the contrary, in all disputes, they constantly headed the opposite parties. Sir Everhard understanding that Anthony Darnel had begun to canvass, and was putting every iron in the fire, in violation and contempt of the *pactum familiæ* before mentioned, fell into a violent passion, that brought on a severe fit of the gout, by which he was disabled from giying personal attention to his own interest. My father, indeed, employed all his diligence and address, and spared neither money, time, nor constitution, till at length he drank himself into a consumption, which was the death of him. But, after all, there is a great difference between a steward and a principal. Mr. Darnel attended in *propria persona*, flattered and caressed the women, feasted the electors, hired mobs, made processions, and scattered about his money in

in such a manner, that our friends durst hardly shew their heads in public.

At this very crisis our young squire, to whom his father had written an account of the transaction, arrived unexpectedly at Greavesbury-hall, and had a long private conference with Sir Everhard. The news of his return spread like wild-fire through all that part of the country : bonfires were made, and the bells set a-ringing in several towns and steeples ; and next morning above seven hundred people were assembled at the gate, with music, flags and streamers, to welcome their young squire, and accompany him to the borough of Ashenton. He set out on foot with this retinue, and entered one end of the town just as Mr. Darnel's mob had come in at the other. Both arrived about the same time at the market-place ; but Mr. Darnel, mounting first into the balcony of the town-house, made a long speech to the people in favour of his own pretensions, not without some invidious reflections glanced

64 THE ADVENTURES OF

glanced at Sir Everhard, his competitor. We did not much mind the acclamations of his party, which we knew had been hired for that purpose: but we were in some pain for Mr. Greaves, who had not been used to speak in public. He took his turn, however, in the balcony; and, uncovering his head, bowed all round with the most engaging courtesy. He was dressed in a green frock trimmed with gold, and his own dark hair flowed about his ears in natural curls, while his face was overspread with a blush, that improved the glow of youth to a deeper crimson, and I dare say set many a female heart a-palpitating. When he made his first appearance, there was just such a humming and clapping of hands as you may have heard when the celebrated Garrick comes upon the stage in King Lear, or King Richard, or any other top character. But how agreeably were we disappointed, when our young gentleman made such an oration as would not have disgraced a Pitt, an Egmont, or a Murray!

SIR LAUNCELOT GREAVES. 65

a Murray ! While he spoke, all was hushed in admiration and attention—you could have almost heard a feather drop to the ground. It would have charmed you to hear with what modesty he recounted the services which his father and grandfather had done to the corporation; with what eloquence he expatiated upon the shameful infraction of the treaty subsisting between the two families; and with what keen and spirited strokes of satire he retorted the sarcasms of Darnel. He no sooner concluded his harangue, than there was such a burst of applause as seemed to rend the very sky. Our musick immediately struck up; our people advanced with their ensigns, and, as every man had a good cudgel, broken heads would have ensued, had not Mr. Darnel and his party thought proper to retreat with uncommon dispatch. He never offered to make another public entrance, as he saw the torrent ran so violently against him; but sat down with his loss,

66 THE ADVENTURES OF

loss, and withdrew his opposition, though at bottom extremely mortified and incensed. Sir Everhard was unanimously elected, and appeared to be the happiest man upon earth ; for, besides the pleasure arising from his victory over this competitor, he was now fully satisfied that his son, instead of disgracing, would do honour to his family. It would have moved a heart of stone, to see with what a tender transport of paternal joy he received his dear Launcelot, after having heard of his deportment and success at Ashenton; where, by the bye, he gave a ball to the ladies, and displayed as much elegance and politeness as if he had been bred at the court of Versailles.

This joyous season was of short duration : in a little time all the happiness of the family was overcast by a sad incident, which hath left such an unfortunate impression upon the mind of the young gentleman, as, I am afraid, will never be effaced.

effaced. Mr. Darnel's niece and ward, the great heiress, whose name is Aurelia, was the most celebrated beauty of the whole country—if I said the whole kingdom, or indeed all Europe, perhaps I should barely do her justice. I dont pretend to be a limner, gemmen; nor does it become me to delineate such excellence: but surely I may presume to repeat from the play;

“ O ! she is all that painting can express,

“ Or youthful poets fancy, when they love !”

At that time she might be about seventeen, tall and fair, and so exquisitely shaped—you may talk of your Venus de Medicis, your Dianas, your Nymphs, and Galateas; but if Praxiteles, and Roubillace, and Wilton, were to lay their heads together, in order to make a complete pattern of beauty, they would hardly

ly reach her model of perfection.—As for complexion, poets will talk of blending the lily with the rose, and bring in a parcel of similies of cowslips, carnations, pinks, and daisies.—There's Dolly, now, has got a very good complexion :—indeed, she's the very picture of health and innocence.

—You are, indeed my pretty lass ;—but *parva componere magnis*.—Miss Daniel is all amazing beauty, delicacy, and dignity ! Then the softness and expression of her fine blue eyes ; her pouting lips of coral hue ; her neck, that rises like a tower of polished alabaster between two mounts of snow.—I tell you what, gemmen, it don't signify talking : if e'er a one of you was to meet this young lady alone, in the midst of a heath or common, or any unfrequented place, he would down on his knees, and think he kneeled before some supernatural being. I'll tell you more : she not only resembles an angel in beauty, but a saint in goodness, and an hermit in humility ;—so void of all pride and affectation ; so soft, and

SIR LAUNCELOT GREAVES. 69

and sweet, and affable, and humane ! Lord ! I could tell such instances of her charity ! —

Sure enough, she and Sir Launcelot were formed by nature for each other : howsoever, the cruel hand of fortune hath intervened, and severed them for ever. Every soul that knew them both, said it was a thousand pities but they should come together, and extinguish in their happy union the mutual animosity of the two families, which had so often embroiled the whole neighbourhood. Nothing was heard but the praises of miss Aurelia Darnel and Mr. Launcelot Greaves ; and no doubt the parties were prepossessed, by this applause, in favour of each other. At length, Mr. Greaves went one Sunday to her parish-church ; but, though the greater part of the congregation watched their looks, they could not perceive that she took the least notice of him ; or that he seemed to be struck with her appearance. He afterwards had an opportunity of seeing her,

more

72 THE ADVENTURES OF

from the box, and the ladies screamed piteously for help. Mr. Greaves chanced to be a-horse back on the other side of an inclosure, when he heard their shrieks ; and riding up to the hedge, knew the chariot, and saw their disaster. The horses were then running full speed in such a direction, as to drive headlong over a precipice into a stone quarry, where they and the chariot, and the ladies, must be dashed in pieces. You may conceive, gemmen, what his thoughts were when he saw such a fine young lady, in the flower of her age, just plunging into eternity ; when he saw the lovely Aurelia on the brink of being precipitated among rocks, where her delicate limbs must be mangled and tore asunder ; when he perceived that, before he could ride round by the gate, the tragedy would be finished. The fence was so thick and high, flanked with a broad ditch on the outside, that he could not hope to clear it, although he was mounted on *Scipio*, bred out of Miss *Cowhip*, the sire *Muley*, and

his *grandfire* the famous Arabian *Mustapba*.

—*Scipio* was bred by my father, who would not have taken a hundred guineas for him from any other person but the young squire.

—Indeed, I have heard my poor father say”—

By this time Ferret's impatience was become so outrageous, that he exclaimed in a furious tone, “Damn your father, and his horse, and his colt into the bargain!”

Tom made no reply, but began to strip with great expedition. Captain Crowe was so choaked with passion, that he could utter nothing but disjointed sentences: he rose from his seat, brandished his horse-whip, and seizing his nephew by the collar, cried, “Odd’s heartlikins! sirrah, I have a good mind—Devil fire your running tackle, you land-lubber!—can’t you steer without all this tacking hither and thither, and the Lord knows whither?—’Noint my block! ’Id give thee a rope’s end for thy supper, if it wa’n’t”——

Dolly had conceived a sneaking kindness

74 THE ADVENTURES OF

for the young lawyer, and thinking him in danger of being roughly handled, flew to his relief. She twisted her hand in Crowe's neckcloth, without ceremony, crying, "Sha't then, I tell thee, old codger.—Who kears a vig for thy woolish tantrums?"

While Crowe looked black in the face, and ran the risque of strangulation under the gripe of this amazon, Mr. Clarke having disengaged himself of his hat, wig, coat, and waistcoat, advanced in an elegant attitude of manual offence towards the misanthrope, who snatched up a gridiron from the chimney-corner, and Discord seemed to flap her footy wings in expectation of battle.—But as the reader may have more than once already cursed the unconscionable length of this chapter, we must postpone to the next opportunity the incidents that succeeded this denunciation of war.

C H A P.

C H A P. IV.

In which it appears that the Knight, when heartily set in for sleeping, was not easily disturbed.

IN all probability the kitchen of the Black Lion, from a domestic temple of society, and good-fellowship, would have been converted into a scene or stage of sanguinary dispute, had not Pallas or Discretion interposed in the person of Mr. Fillet, and with the assistance of the hostler, disarmed the combatants not only of their arms, but also of their resentment. The impetuosity of Mr. Clarke was a little checked at sight of the gridiron, which Ferret brandished with uncommon dexterity; a circumstance from whence the company were, upon reflexion, induced to believe, that before he plunged into the sea of politics, he had occasionally figured in the character of that facetious droll, who

E 2 accum-

78 THE ADVENTURES OF

accompanies your itinerant physicians, under the familiar appellations of Merry-Andrew, or Jack-Pudding, and on a wooden stage entertains the populace with a solo on the falt-box, or a sonata on the tongs and gridiron. Be that as it may, the young lawyer seemed to be a little discomposed at the glancing of this extraordinary weapon of offence, which the fair hands of Dolly had scoured, until it shone as bright as the shield of Achilles ; or as the emblem of good old English fare, which hangs by a red ribbon round the neck of that thrice-honoured sage's head, in velvet bonnet cased, who presides by rotation at the genial board, distinguished by the title of the *Beef-stake Club* : where the delicate rumps irresistibly attract the stranger's eye, and, while they seem to cry "Come cut me—come cut me," constrain, by wonderous sympathy, each mouth to overflow : where the obliging and humourous Jemmy B——t, the gentle Billy H——d, replete with human kindness, and the ge-

nerous Johnny B——d, respected and beloved by all the world, attend as the priests and ministers of Mirth, good Cheer, and Jollity; and assist with culinary art, the raw, unpractised, awkward guest.

But, to return from this digressive simile: the hostler no sooner stept between those menacing antagonists, than Tom Clarke very quietly resumed his cloaths, and Mr. Ferret resigned the gridiron without further question. The doctor did not find it quite so easy to release the throat of Captain Crowe from the masculine grasp of the virago Dolly, whose fingers could not be disengaged until the honest seaman was almost at the last gasp. After some pause, during which he panted for breath, and untied his neckcloth, “ Damn thee, for a brimstone galley (cried he); I was never so grappled withal since I knew a card from a compass.—Adzoooks ! the jade has so taughtened my rigging, d’ye see, that I— Snatch my bowlings, if I come athwart thy hawser, I’ll turn thy keel upwards—or

78 THE ADVENTURES OF

mayhap set thee a-driving under thy bare
poles—I will—I will, you hell-fire saucy
—I will.”

Dolly made no reply; but seeing Mr. Clarke sit down again with great composure, took her station likewise at the opposite side of the apartment. Then Mr. Fillet requested the lawyer to proceed with his story, which, after three hemms, he accordingly prosecuted in these words.

“ I told you, gemmier, that Mr. Greaves was mounted on Scipio, when he saw miss Darnel and her mother in danger of being hurried over a precipice. Without reflecting a moment, he gave Scipio the spur, and at one spring he cleared five and twenty feet, over hedge and ditch, and every obstruction. Then he rode full speed, in order to turn the coach-horses; and, finding them quite wild and furious, endeavoured to drive against the counter of the hither horse, which he missed, and staked poor Scipio

Scipio on the pole of the coach. The shock was so great, that the coach-horses made a full stop within ten yards of the quarry, and Mr. Greaves was thrown forwards towards the coach-box, which, mounting with admirable dexterity, he seized the reins before the horses could recover from their fright. At that instant the coachman came running up, and loosed them from the traces with the utmost dispatch. Mr. Greaves had now time to give his attention to the ladies, who were almost distracted with fear. He no sooner opened the chariot-door than Aurelia, with a wildness of look, sprung into his arms; and, clasping him round the neck, fainted away. I leave you to guess, gemmem, what were his feelings at this instant. The mother was not so discomposed but that she could contribute to the recovery of her daughter, whom the young squire still supported in his embrace. At length she retrieved the use of her senses, and perceiving the situation in which she was,

80 THE ADVENTURES OF

the blood revisited her face with a redoubled glow, while she desired him to set her down upon the turf.

"Mrs. Darnel, far from being shy or reserved in her compliments of acknowledgments, kissed Mr. Launcelot without ceremony, the tears of gratitude running down her cheeks: she called him her dear son, her generous deliverer, who, at the hazard of his own life, had saved her and her child from the most dismal fate that could be imagined. Mr. Greaves was so much transported on this occasion, that he could not help disclosing a passion, which he had hitherto industriously concealed. "What I have done (said he) was but a common office of humanity, which I would have performed for any of my fellow-creatures: but, for the preservation of miss Aurelia Darnel, I would at any time sacrifice my life with pleasure." The young lady did not hear this declaration unmoved: her face was again flushed, and her eyes sparkled with pleasure: nor was

was the youth's confession disagreeable to the good lady her mother, who at one glance perceived all the advantages of such an union between the two families.

Mr. Greaves proposed to send the coachman to his father's stable for a pair of sober horses, that could be depended upon, to draw the ladies home to their own habitation; but they declined the offer, and chose to walk, as the distance was not great. He then insisted upon his being their conductor; and, each taking him under the arm, supported them to their own gate, where such an apparition filled all the domestics with astonishment. Mrs. Darnel, taking him by the hand, led him into the house, where she welcomed him with another affectionate embrace, and indulged him with an ambrosial kiss of Aurelia, saying, "But for you, we had both been by this time in eternity.—Sure it was heaven that sent you as an angel to our assistance!" She

E 5 kindly.

82 THE ADVENTURES OF

kindly inquired if he had himself sustained any damage in administering that desperate remedy to which they owed their lives. She entertained him with a small collation; and, in the course of the conversation, lamented the animosity which had so long divided two neighbouring families of such influence and character. He was not slow in signifying his approbation of her remarks, and expressing the most eager desire of seeing all those unhappy differences removed: in a word, they parted with mutual satisfaction.

"Just as he advanced from the outward gate, on his return to Greavesbury-hall, he was met by Anthony Darnel on horseback, who riding up to him with marks of surprize and resentment, saluted him with "Your servant, Sir.—Have you any commands for me?" The other replying with an air of indifference, "None at all," Mr. Darnel asked, what had procured him the honour of a visit. The young gentleman, perceiving by the man-

ner in which he spoke, that the old quarrel was not yet extinguished, answered, with equal disdain, that the visit was not intended for him; and that, if he wanted to know the cause it, he might inform himself by his own servants. "So I shall (cried the uncle of Aurelia); and perhaps let you know my sentiments of the matter—" "Hereafter as it may be," said the youth; who, turning out of the avenue, walked home, and made his father acquainted with the particulars of this adventure.

"The old gentleman chid him for his rashness; but seemed pleased with the success of his attempt, and still more so, when he understood his sentiments of Aurelia, and the deportment of the ladies.

"Next day the son sent over a servant with a compliment, to enquire about their health; and the messenger, being seen by Mr. Darnel, was told that the ladies were indisposed, and did not chuse to be

E 6 troubled.

34 THE ADVENTURES OF

troubled with messages. The mother was really seized with a fever, produced by the agitation of her spirits, which every day became more and more violent, until the physicians despaired of her life. Believing that her end approached, she sent a trusty servant to Mr. Greaves, desiring that she might see him without delay; and he immediately set out with the messenger, who introduced him in the dark. He found the old lady in bed, almost exhausted, and the fair Aurelia sitting by her, overwhelmed with grief, her lovely hair in the utmost disorder, and her charming eyes inflamed with weeping. The good lady beckoning Mr. Launcelot to approach, and directing all the attendants to quit the room, except a favourite maid, from whom I learned the story, she took him by the hand, and fixing her eyes upon him with all the fondness of a mother, shed some tears, in silence, while the same marks of sorrow trickled down his cheeks. After this affecting pause,

pause, “ My dear son (said she), Oh! that I could have lived to see you so indeed ! you find me hastening to the goal of life.”—

Here the tender-hearted Aurelia, being unable to contain herself longer, broke out into a violent passion of grief, and wept aloud. The mother, waiting patiently till she had thus given vent to her anguish, calmly intreated her to resign herself submissively to the will of heaven : then turning to Mr. Launcelot, “ I had indulged (said she) a fond hope of seeing you allied to my family.—This is no time for me to insist upon the ceremonies and forms of a vain world.—Aurelia looks upon you with the eyes of tender prepossession.” No sooner had she pronounced these words than he threw himself on his knees before the young lady, and, pressing her hand to his lips, breathed the softest expressions which the most delicate love could suggest. “ I know (resumed the mother) that your passion is mutually sincere ;

86 THE ADVENTURES OF

sincere ; and I should die satisfied, if I thought your union would not be opposed : but that violent man, my brother-in-law, who is Aurelia's sole guardian, will thwart her wishes with every obstacle that brutal resentment and implacable malice can contrive. Mr. Greaves, I have long admired your virtues, and am confident that I can depend upon your honour.

—You shall give me your word, that, when I am gone, you will take no steps in this affair without the concurrence of your father ; and endeavour, by all fair and honourable means, to vanquish the prejudices, and obtain the consent of her uncle : the rest we must leave to the dispensation of Providence.”

“ The squire promised, in the most solemn and fervent manner, to obey all her injunctions, as the last dictates of a parent whom he should never cease to honour. Then she favoured them both with a great deal of salutary advice, touching their conduct before and after marriage :

marriage ; and presented him with a ring, as a memorial of her affection : at the same time he pulled another off his finger, and made a tender of it as a pledge of his love to Aurelia, whom her mother permitted to receive this token. Finally, he took a last farewell of the good matron, and returned to his father with the particulars of this interview.

“ In two days Mrs. Darnel departed this life, and Aurelia was removed to the house of a relation, where her grief had like to have proved fatal to her constitution.

“ In the mean time, the mother was no sooner committed to the earth, than Mr. Greaves, mindful of her exhortations, began to take measures for a reconciliation with the guardian. He engaged several gentlemen to interpose their good offices ; but they always met with the most mortifying repulse : and at last Anthony Darnel declared, that his hatred to the house of Greaves was hereditary, habitual,

88 THE ADVENTURES OF

bitual, and unconquerable. He swore he would spend his heart's blood to perpetuate the quarrel; and that, sooner than his niece should match with young Launcelot, he would sacrifice her with his own hand. The young gentleman, finding his prejudice so rancorous and invincible, left off making any further advances; and, since he found it impossible to obtain his consent, resolved to cultivate the good graces of Aurelia, and wed her in despite of her implacable guardian. He found means to establish a literary correspondence with her, as soon as her grief was a little abated; and even to effect an interview, after her return to her own house: but he soon had reason to repent of this indulgence. The uncle entertained spies upon the young lady, who gave him an account of this meeting; in consequence of which she was suddenly hurried to some distant part of the country, which we never could discover.

"It

" It was then we thought Mr. Launcelot a little disordered in his brain, his grief was so wild, and his passion so impetuous. He refused all sustenance, neglected his person, renounced his amusements, rode out in the rain, sometimes bare-headed, strolled about the fields all night, and became so peevish, that none of the domestics durst speak to him, without the hazard of broken bones. Having played these pranks for about three weeks, to the unspeakable chagrin of his father, and the astonishment of all that knew him, he suddenly grew calm, and his good humour returned. But this, as your sea-faring people say, was a deceitful calm, that soon ushered in a dreadful storm.

" He had long sought an opportunity to tamper with some of Mr. Darnel's servants, who could inform him of the place where Aurelia was confined; but there was not one about the family who could give him that satisfaction: for the persons
who

90 THE ADVENTURES OF

who accompanied her, remained as a watch upon her motions, and none of the other domestics were privy to the transaction. All attempts proving fruitless, he could no longer restrain his impatience; but throwing himself in the way of the uncle, upbraided him in such harsh terms, that a formal challenge ensued. They agreed to decide their difference without witnesses; and one morning, before sun-rise, met on that very common where Mr. Greaves had saved the life of Aurelia. The first pistol was fired on each side without any effect; but Mr. Darnel's second wounded the young squire in the flank: nevertheless, having a pistol in reserve, he desired his antagonist to ask his life. The other, instead of submitting, drew his sword; and Mr. Greaves, firing his piece into the air, followed his example. The contest then became very hot, though of short continuance. Darnel being disarmed at the first onset, our young squire gave him back the sword, which he was base enough

enough to use a second time against his conqueror. Such an instance of repeated ingratitude and brutal ferocity divested Mr. Greaves of his temper and forbearance. He attacked Mr. Anthony with great fury, and at the first lunge ran him up to the hilt, at the same time seizing with his left hand the hilt of his enemy's sword, which he broke in disdain. Mr. Darnel having fallen, the other immediately mounted his horse, which he had tied to a tree before the engagement; and riding full speed to Ashenton, sent a surgeon to Anthony's assistance. He afterwards ingenuously confessed all these particulars to his father, who was overwhelmed with consternation, for the wounds of Darnel were judged mortal; and as no person had seen the particulars of the duel, Mr. Launcelot might have been convicted of murder.

“ On these considerations, before a warrant could be served upon him, the old knight, by dint of the most eager intreaties, accompanied with marks of horror and

and despair, prevailed upon his son to withdraw himself from the kingdom, until such time as the storm should be overblown. Had his heart been unengaged, he would have chose to travel; but at this period, when his whole soul was engrossed and so violently agitated by his passion for Aurelia, nothing but the fear of seeing the old gentleman run distracted, would have induced him to desist from the pursuit of that young lady, far less quit the kingdom where she resided. Well then, gemmem, he repaired to Harwich, where he embarked for Holland, from whence he proceeded to Brussels, where he procured a passport from the French king, by virtue of which he travelled to Marseilles, and there took a tartan for Genoa. The first letter sir Everhard received from him was dated at Florence. Mean while the surgeon's prognostic was not altogether verified. Mr. Darnel did not die immediately of his wounds; but he lingered a long time, as it were, in the arms
of

of death, and even partly recovered : yet, in all probability, he will never be wholly restored to the enjoyment of his health ; and is obliged every summer to attend the hot well at Bristol. As his wounds began to heal, his hatred to Mr. Greaves seemed to revive with augmented violence ; and he is now, if possible, more than ever determined against all reconciliation. Mr. Launcelot, after having endeavoured to amuse his imagination with a succession of curious objects, in a tour of Italy, took up his residence at a town called Pisa, and there fell into a deep melancholy, from which nothing could rouse him but the news of his father's death.

" The old gentleman (God rest his soul) never held up his head after the departure of his darling Launcelot ; and the dangerous condition of Darnel kept up his apprehension : this was reinforced by the obstinate silence of the youth, and certain accounts of his disordered mind, which he had received from some of those persons
who

94 THE ADVENTURES OF

who take pleasure in communicating disagreeable tidings. A complication of all these grievances, co-operating with a severe fit of the gout and gravel, produced a fever, which in a few days brought sir Everhard to his long home ; after he had settled his affairs with heaven and earth, and made his peace with God and man. I'll assure you, gemmem, he made a most edifying and christian end : he died regretted by all his neighbours except Anthony, and might be said to be embalmed by the tears of the poor, to whom he was always a bounteous benefactor.

" When the son, now sir Launcelot, came home, he appeared so meagre, wan, and hollow-eyed, that the servants hardly knew their young master. His first care was to take possession of his fortune, and settle accounts with the steward who had succeeded my father. These affairs being discussed, he spared no pains to get intelligence concerning miss Darnel ; and soon learned

learned more of that young lady than he desired to know; for it was become the common talk of the country, that a match was agreed upon between her and young squire Sycamore, a gentleman of a very great fortune. These tidings were probably confirmed under her own hand, in a letter which she wrote to sir Launcelot. The contents were never exactly known but to the parties themselves: nevertheless, the effects were too visible; for, from that blessed moment, he spoke not one word to any living creature for the space of three days: but was seen sometimes to shed a flood of tears, and sometimes to burst out into a fit of laughing. At last he broke silence, and seemed to wake from his disorder. He became more fond than ever of the exercise of riding, and began to amuse himself again with acts of benevolence. One instance of his generosity and justice deserves to be recorded in brass or marble: you must know, gemmen, the rector of the parish was lately dead, and sir

96 THE ADVENTURES OF

sir Everhard had promised the presentation to another clergyman. In the mean time, sir Launcelot chancing one Sunday to ride through a lane, perceived a horse saddled and bridled, feeding on the side of a fence ; and casting his eyes around, beheld on the other side of the hedge an object lying extended on the ground, which he took to be the body of a murdered traveller. He forthwith alighted ; and, leaping into the field, descried a man at full length wrapped in a great coat, and writhing in agony. Approaching nearer, he found it was a clergyman, in his gown and cassock. When he inquired into the case, and offered his assistance, the stranger rose up, thanked him for his courtesy, and declared that he was now very well. The knight, who thought there was something mysterious in this incident, expressed a desire to know the cause of his rolling in the grass in that manner ; and the clergyman, who knew his person, made no scruple in gratifying his curiosity. “ You must know, sir,

said

faid he, I serve the curacy of your own parish, for which the late incumbent payed me twenty pounds a year; but this sum being scarce sufficient to maintain my wife and children, who are five in number, I agreed to read prayers in the afternoon at another church about four miles from hence; and for this additional duty I receive ten pounds more: as I keep a horse, it was formerly an agreeable exercise rather than a toil; but of late years I have been afflicted with a rupture, for which I consulted the most eminent operators in the kingdom; but I have no cause to rejoice in the effects of their advice, though one of them assured me I was completely cured. The malady is now more troublesome than ever, and often comes upon me so violently while I am on horseback, that I am forced to alight, and lie down upon the ground, until the cause of the disorder can for the time be reduced."

Sir Launcelot not only condoled with him upon his misfortune, but desired him

to throw up the second cure, and he would pay him ten pounds a year out of his own pocket. Your generosity confounds me, good sir : (cried the clergyman) and yet, I ought not to be surprised at any instance of benevolence in sir Launcelot Greaves ; but I will check the fulness of my heart. I shall only observe, that your good intention towards me can hardly take effect. The gentleman, who is to succeed the late incumbent, has given me notice to quit the premises, as he hath provided a friend of his own for the curacy." "What ! (cried the knight) does he mean to take your bread from you, without assigning any other reason ?" " Surely, sir, replied the ecclesiastic, I know of no other reason. I hope my morals are irreproachable, and that I have done my duty with conscientious regard : I may venture an appeal to the parishioners among whom I have lived these seventeen years. After all, it is natural for every man to favour his own friends in preference to strangers. As for me,

SIR LAUNCELOT GREAVES. 99

me, I propose to try my fortune in the great city ; and I doubt not but providence will provide for me and my little ones." To this declaration Sir Launcelot made no reply ; but riding home set, on foot a strict enquiry into the character of this man, whose name was Jenkias. He found that he was a reputed scholar, equally remarkable for his modesty and good life ; that he visited the sick, assisted the needy, compromised disputes among his neighbours, and spent his time in such a manner as would have done honour to any christian divine. Thus informed, the knight sent for the gentleman to whom the living had been promised, and accosted him to this effect : " Mr. Tootle, I have a favour to ask of you. The person who serves the cure of this parish is a man of good character, beloved by the people, and has a large family. I shall be obliged to you if you will continue him in the curacy." The other told him he was sorry he could not comply with his request, being that he had

F 2 already

220 THE ADVENTURES OF

already promised the curacy to a friend of his own." "No matter: (replied Sir Launcelot) since I have not interest with you, I will endeavour to provide for Mr. Jenkins in some other way."

The same afternoon he walked over to the curate's house, and told him that he had spoken in his behalf to Dr. Tootle, but the curacy was pre-engaged. The good man having made a thousand acknowledgments for the trouble his honour had taken; I have not interest sufficient to make you curate, (said the knight) but I can give you the living itself, and that you shall have." So saying, he retired; leaving Mr. Jenkins incapable of uttering one syllable, so powerfully was he struck with this unexpected turn of fortune. The presentation was immediately made out; and in a few days Mr. Jenkins was put in possession of his benefice, to the inexpressible joy of the congregation.

Hitherto every thing went right, and every unprejudiced person commended the knight's

knight's conduct: but, in a little time, his generosity seemed to overleap the bounds of discretion; and even in some cases might be thought tending to a breach of the king's peace. For example, he compelled, *vi & armis*, a rich farmer's son to marry the daughter of a cottager, whom the young fellow had debauched. Indeed, it seems there was a promise of marriage in the case, though it could not be legally ascertained. The wench took on dismally; and her parents had recourse to Sir Launcelot, who, fending for the delinquent, expostulated with him severely on the injury he had done the young woman, and exhorted him to save her life and reputation by performing his promise; in which case he (Sir Launcelot) would give her three hundred pounds to her portion. Whether the farmer thought there was something interested in this uncommon offer, or was a little elevated by the consciousness of his father's wealth; he rejected the proposal with rustic disdain, and said, if so be as how the wench

would swear the child to him, he would settle it with the parish: but declared, that no squire in the land should oblige him to buckle with such a cracked pitcher. This resolution, however, he could not maintain: for, in less than two hours, the rector of the parish had direction to publish the banns, and the ceremony was performed in due course.

Now, though we know not precisely the nature of the arguments that were used with the farmer, we may conclude they were of the minatory species; for the young fellow could not, for some time, look any person in the face. The knight acted as the general redresser of grievances. If a woman complained to him of being ill treated by her husband, he first inquired into the foundation of the complaint; and if he found it just catechised the defendant. If the warning had no effect, and the man proceeded to fresh acts of violence; then his judge took the execution of the law in his own hand, and horsewhipped the party.

Thus



Thus he involved himself in several law-suits, that drained him of pretty large sums of money. He seemed particularly incensed at the least appearance of oppression; and supported divers poor tenants against the extortion of their landlords. Nay, he has been known to travel two hundred miles as a volunteer, to offer his assistance in the cause of a person, who he heard was by chicanery and oppression wronged of a considerable estate. He accordingly took her under his protection, relieved her distresses, and was at a vast expence in bringing the suit to a determination; which being unfavourable to his client, he resolved to bring an appeal into the house of lords, and certainly would have executed his purpose, if the gentlewoman had not died in the interim.

At this period Ferret interrupted the narrator, by observing that the said Greaves was a common nuisance, and ought to be prosecuted on the statute of barretry.
“ No, sir, (resumed Mr. Clarke) he can-

not be convicted of barretry, unless he is always at variance with some person or other, a mover of suits and quarrels, who disturbs the peace under colour of law. Therefore he is in the indictment stiled, *Communis malefactor, calumniator & seminator litium.* “ Prithee, truce with thy definitions, (cried Ferret) and make an end of thy long-winded story. Thou hast no title to be so tedious, until thou comest to have a coif in the court of common pleas.”

Tom smiled contemptuous, and had just opened his mouth to proceed, when the company were disturbed by a hideous repetition of groans, that seemed to issue from the chamber in which the body of the squire was deposited. The landlady snatched the candle, and ran into the room, followed by the doctor and the rest; and this accident naturally suspended the narration. In like manner we shall conclude the chapter, that the reader may have time to breathe, and digest what he has already heard.

C H A P.

C H A P. V.

In which this recapitulation draws to a close.

WHEN the landlady entered the room from whence the groaning proceeded, she found the squire lying on his back under the dominion of the night-mare, which rode him so hard, that he not only groaned and snorted, but the sweat ran down his face in streams. The perturbation of his brain, occasioned by this profuse, and the fright he had lately undergone, gave rise to a very terrible dream, in which he fancied himself apprehended for a robbery. The horror of the gallows was strong upon him, when he was suddenly awaked by a violent shock from the doctor; and the company broke in upon his view, still perverted by fear, and bedimmed by slumber. His dream was now realised by a full persuasion that he was surrounded by the constable and his gang.

The first object that presented itself to his disordered view was the figure of Ferret, who might very well have passed for the finisher of the law : against him therefore the first effort of his despair was directed. He started upon the floor ; and seizing a certain utensil, that shall be nameless, launched it at the misanthrope with such violence, that, had he not cautiously slipped his head aside, it is supposed that actual fire would have been produced from the collision of two such hard substances. All future mischief was prevented by the strength and agility of captain Crowe, who, springing upon the assailant, pinioned his arms to his sides, crying, " O damn ye, if you are for running a-head, I'll soon bring you to your bearings." The squire thus restrained, soon recollected himself, and gazing upon every individual in the apartment, " Wounds ! (said he) I've had an ugly dream. I thought, for all the world, they were carrying me to Newgate ; and that there

there was Jack Ketch coom to vetch me before my taim."

" Ferret, who was the person he had thus distinguished, eying him with a look of the most emphatic malevolence, told him, it was very natural for a knave to dream of Newgate ; and that he hoped to see the day when this dream would be found a true prophecy, and the commonwealth purged of all such rogues and vagabonds : but it could not be expected that the vulgar would be honest and conscientious, while the great were distinguished by profligacy and corruption. The squire was disposed to make a practical reply to this insinuation, when Mr. Ferret prudently withdrew himself from the scene of altercation. The good woman of the house persuaded his antagonist to take out his nap, assuring him that the eggs and bacon, with a mug of excellent ale, should be forthcoming in due season.

The affair being thus fortunately adjusted, the guests returned to the kitchen,

and Mr. Clarke resumed his story to this effect. " You'll please to take notice, gemmen, that besides the instances I have alledged of Sir Launcelot's extravagant benevolence, I could recount a great many others of the same nature, and particularly the laudable vengeance he took of a country lawyer.—I'm sorry that any such miscreants should belong to the profession. He was clerk of the assize, gemmen, in a certain town, not a great way distant, and having a blank pardon left by the judges for some criminals, whose cases were attended with favourable circumstances, he would not insert the name of one who could not procure a guinea for the fee : and the poor fellow, who had only stole an hour-glass out of a shoemaker's window, was actually executed after a long respite; during which he had been permitted to go abroad, and earn his subsistence by his daily labour.

" Sir Launcelot, being informed of this barbarous act of avarice, and having
some

some ground that bordered on the lawyer's estate, not only rendered him contemptible and infamous, by exposing him as often as they met on the grand jury, but also, being vested with the property of the great tythes, proved such a troublesome neighbour, sometimes by making waste among his hay and corn, sometimes by instituting suits against him for petty trespasses, that he was fairly obliged to quit his habitation, and remove him into another part of the kingdom. All these avocations could not divert Sir Launcelot from the execution of a wild scheme, which has carried his extravagance to such a pitch, that I am afraid if a statute—you understand me, gemmen, were sued, the jury would—I don't choose to explain myself further on this circumstance. Be that as it may, the servants at Greavesbury-hall were not a little confounded, when their master took down from the family armoury a compleat suit of armour, which had belonged to his great grandfather, Sir Marmaduke Greaves,
a great

310 THE ADVENTURES OF

a great warrior, who lost his life in the service of his king. This armour being scoured, repaired, and altered, so as to fit Sir Launcelot, a certain knight, whom I don't choose to name, because I believe he cannot be proved *compos mentis*, came down seemingly on a visit, with two attendants; and, on the eve of the festival of St. George, the armour being carried into the chapel, Sir Launcelot (Lord have mercy upon us !) remained all night in that dismal place, alone and without light, though it was confidently reported all over the country, that the place was haunted by the spirit of his great great uncle, who, being lunatic, had cut his throat from ear to ear, and was found dead on the communion table."

It was observed, that while Mr. Clarke had rehearsed this circumstance, his eyes began to stare, and his teeth to chatter; while Dolly, whose looks were fixed invariably on this narrator, growing pale, and hitching her joint-stool nearer the chimney, exclaimed in a frightened tone,

"Moother,

SIR LAUNCELOT GREAVES. 121

“ Moothier, moother, in the neame of God,
look to ‘un ! how a quakes ! as I’m a pre-
cious faoul, a looks as if a saw something.”
Tom forced a smile, and thus proceeded :

While Sir Launcelot tarried within the
chapel, with the doors all locked, the
other knight stalked round and round it on-
the outside, with his fword drawn, to the
terror of divers persons who were present
at the ceremony. As soon as day broke,
he opened one of the doors, and, going in
to Sir Launcelot, read a book for some
time, which we did suppose to be the con-
stitutions of knight-errantry : then we heard
a loud flap which echoed through the whole
chapel, and the stranger pronounce with an
audible and solemn voice, “ In the name
of God, St. Michael, and St. George, I
dub thee knight—be faithful, bold, and
fortunate.” You cannot imagine, gem-
men, what an effect this strange ceremony
had upon the people who were assembled.
They gazed at one another in silent horror;
and, when Sir Launcelot came forth com-
pletely

pletely armed, took to their heels in a body, and fled with the utmost precipitation. I myself was overturned in the crowd ; and this was the case with that very individual person who now serves him as a squire. He was so frightened, that he could not rise, but lay roaring in such a manner, that the knight came up, and gave him a thwack with his lance across the shoulders, which roused him with a vengeance. For my own part, I freely own I was not altogether unmoved at seeing such a figure come stalking out of a church in the grey of the morning ; for it recalled to my remembrance the idea of the ghost in Hamlet, which I had seen acted in Drury-lane, when I made my first trip to London ; and I had not yet got rid of the impression.

“ Sir Launcelet, attended by the other knight, proceeded to the stable ; from whence, with his own hands, he drew forth one of his best horses, a fine mettlesome sorrel, who had got blood in him, ornamented with

with rich trappings. In a trice the two knights, and the other two strangers, who now appeared to be trumpeters, were mounted. Sir Launcelot's armour was lacquered black ; and on his shield was represented the moon in her first quarter, with the motto *impletat orbem*. The trumpets having sounded a charge, the stranger pronounced with a loud voice, “ God preserve this gallant knight in all his honourable achievements ; and may he long continue to press the sides of his now adopted steed, which I denominate Bronzomarte, hoping that he will rival in swiftness and spirit Bayardo, Brigliadoro, or any other steed of past or present chivalry ! After another flourish of the trumpets, all four clapped spurs to their horses, Sir Launce-
lot couching his lance, and galloped to and fro, as if they had been mad, to the terror and astonishment of all the spectators. What should have induced our knight to choose this here man for his squire, is not easy to determine ; for, of all
the

the servants about the house, he was the least likely either to please his master, or engage in such an undertaking. His name is Timothy Crabshaw, and he acted in the capacity of whipper-in to Sir Everhard. He afterwards married the daughter of a poor cottager, by whom he has several children, and was employed about the house as a ploughman and carter. To be sure the fellow has a dry sort of humour about him: but he was universally hated among the servants for his abusive tongue and perverse disposition, which often brought him into trouble; for though the fellow is as strong as an elephant, he has no more courage naturally than a chicken—I say naturally, because, since his being a member of knight-errantry, he has done some things that appear altogether incredible and *præternatural*.

Timothy kept such a bawling, after he had received the blow from Sir Launcelot, that every body on the field thought some of his bones were broken; and his wife,

wife, with five bantlings, came snivelling to the knight, who ordered her to send the husband directly to his house. Tim accordingly went thither, groaning piteously all the way, creeping along with his body bent like a Greenland canoe. As soon as he entered the court, the outward door was shut; and Sir Launcelot coming down stairs with a horsewhip in his hand, asked what was the matter with him that he complained so dismally? To this question he replied, "that it was as common as duckweed in his country, for a man to complain when his bones were broke." "What should have broke your bones?" said the knight. "I cannot guesf, (answering the other) unless it was that delicate switch that your honour in your mad pranks handled so dextrously upon my carcase." Sir Launcelot then told him, there was nothing so good for a bruise as a sweat, and he had the remedy in his hand. Timothy eying the horsewhip askance, observed that there was another still more speedy;

speedy ; to wit, a moderate pill of lead, with a sufficient dose of gunpowder." "No, rascal, (cried the knight) that must be reserved for your betters." So saying, he employed the instrument so effectually, that Crabshaw soon forgot his fractured ribs, and capered about with great agility. When he had been disciplined in this manner to some purpose, the knight told him he might retire ; but ordered him to return next morning, when he should have a repetition of the medicine, provided he did not find himself capable of walking in an erect posture. The gate was no sooner thrown open, than Timothy ran home with all the speed of a grey-hound, and corrected his wife, by whose advice he had pretended to be so grievously damaged in his person. No body dreamed that he would next day present himself at Greavesbury-hall ; nevertheless, he was there very early in the morning, and even closetted an whole hour with Sir Launcelot. He came out making wry faces, and several times
slapped

slapped himself on the fore-head, crying, “ Bodikins ! thof he be creazy, I an’t, that I an’t !” When he was asked what was the matter, he said, he believed the devil had got in him, and he should never be his own man again. That same day the knight carried him to Ashenton, where he bespoke those accoutrements which he now wears ; and while these were making, it was thought the poor fellow would have run distracted. He did nothing but growl, and curse, and swear to himself, run backwards and forwards between his own hutt and Greavesbury-hall, and quarrel with the horses in the stable. At length his wife and family were removed into a snug farmhouse that happened to be empty, and care taken that they should be comfortably maintained.

“ These precautions being taken, the knight, one morning, at day-break, mounted Bronzomarte, and Crabshaw as his squire, aſeended the back of a clumsy-cart-horse, called Gilbert. This again
was

118 THE ADVENTURES OF

was looked upon as an instance of insanity in the said Crabshaw ; for, of all the horses in the stables, Gilbert was the most stubborn and vicious, and had often like to have done a mischief to Timothy while he drove the cart and plough. When he was out of humour, he would kick and plunge as if the devil was in him. He once thrust Crabshaw into the middle of a quick-set-hedge, where he was terribly torn ; another time he canted him over his head into a quagmire, where he stuck with his heels up, and must have perished if people had not been passing that way ; a third time he seized him in the stable with his teeth by the rim of the belly, and swung him off the ground, to the great danger of his life ; and I'll be hanged if it was not owing to Gilbert that Crabshaw was now thrown into the river.

Thus mounted and accoutred, the knight and his squire set out on their first excursion. They turned off from the common highway, and travelled all that day with-

out meeting any thing worth recounting : but, in the morning of the second day, they were favoured with an adventure. The hunt was upon a common, through which they travelled, and the hounds were in full cry after a fox, when Timothy, prompted by his own mischievous disposition, and neglecting the order of his master, who called aloud to him to desist, rode up to the hounds, and crossed them at full gallop. The huntsman, who was not far off, running towards the squire, bestowed upon his head such a memento with his pole, as made the landscape dance before his eyes ; and in a twinkling he was surrounded by all the fox-hunters, who plied their whips about his ears with infinite agility. Sir Launcelot advancing at an easy pace, instead of assisting the disastrous squire, exhorted his adversaries to punish him severely for his insolence, and they were not slow in obeying this injunction. Crabshaw finding himself in this disagreeable situation, and that there was no suc-

cour

cour to be expected from his master, on whose prowess he had depended, grew desperate; and, clubbing his whip, laid about him with great fury, wheeling about Gilbert, who was not idle; for he, having received some of the favours intended for his rider, both bit with his teeth, and kicked with his heels; and at last made his way through the ring that incircled him, though not before he had broke the huntsman's leg, lamed one of the best horses on the field, and killed half a score of the hounds.

The squire seeing himself clear of the fray, did nottarry to take leave of his master, but made the most of his way to Greavesbury-hall, where he appeared hardly with any vestige of the human countenance, so much had he been defaced in this adventure. He did not fail to raise a great clamour against Sir Launcelot, whom he cursed as a coward in plain terms, swearing he would never serve him another day: but whether he altered his mind on cooler reflection, or

was lectured by his wife, who well understood her own interest, he rose with the cock, and went again in quest of Sir Launcelot, whom he found on the eve of a very hazardous enterprize. In the midst of a lane the knight happened to meet with a party of about forty recruits, commanded by a serjeant, a corporal, and a drummer, which last had his drum slung at his back; but seeing such a strange figure mounted on a high-spirited horse, he was seized with an inclination to divert his company. With this view he braced his drum, and hanging it in his proper position, began to beat a point of war, advancing under the very nose of Bronzomarte; while the corporal exclaimed, “ Damn my eyes, who have we got here? old king Stephen, from the horse armoury, in the Tower; or the fellow that rides armed at my lord mayor’s shew.” The knight’s steed seemed at least as well pleased with the sound of the drum as were the recruits that followed it; and signified his satisfac-

122 THE ADVENTURES OF

tion in some curvetings and caprioles, which did not at all discompose the rider, who, addressing himself to the serjeant, “ Friend, said he, you ought to teach your drummer better manners. I would chastise the fellow on the spot for his insolence, were it not out of the respect I bear to his majesty’s service.” “ Respect mine a——! (cried this ferocious commander) what, d’ye think to frighten us with your pewter pifspot on your scull, and your lacquer’d potlid on your arm? get out of the way and be damned, or I’ll raise with my halbert such a clutter upon your target, that you’ll remember it the longest day you have to live.” At that instant, Crabshaw arriving upon Gilbert, “ So rascal, said Sir Launcelot, you are returned. Go and beat in that scoundrel’s drum-head.”

“ The squire, who saw no weapons of offence about the drummer but a sword, which he hoped the owner durst not draw; and being resolved to exert himself in mak-

ing atonement for his desertion, advanced to execute his master's orders : but Gilbert, who liked not the noise, refused to proceed in the ordinary way. Then the squire turning his tail to the drummer, he advanced in a retrograde motion, and with one kick of his heels, not only broke the drum into a thousand pieces, but laid the drummer in the mire, with such a blow upon his hip-bone, that he halted all the days of his life. The recruits, perceiving the discomfiture of their leader, armed themselves with stones ; the serjeant raised his halbert in a posture of defence, and immediately a severe action ensued. By this time, Crabshaw had drawn his fword, and begun to lay about him like a devil incarnate ; but, in a little time, he was saluted by a volley of stones, one of which knocked out two of his grinders, and brought him to the earth, where he had like to have found no quarter ; for the whole company crowded about him, with their cudgels brandished ; and perhaps he owed his pre-

servation to their pressing so hard that they hindered one another from using their weapons. Sir Launcelot, seeing with indignation the unworthy treatment his squire had received, and scorning to stain his lance with the blood of plebeians, instead of couching it in the rest, seized it by the middle, and fetching one blow at the serjeant, broke in twain the halbert which he had raised as a quarter-staff for his defence. The second stroke encountered his pate, which being the hardest part about him, sustained the shock without damage; but the third, lighting on his ribs, he honoured the giver with immediate prostration. The general being thus overthrown, Sir Launcelot advanced to the relief of Crabshaw, and handled his weapon so effectually, that the whole body of the enemy were disabled or routed, before one cudgel had touched the carcase of the fallen squire. The corporal, instead of standing by his commanding officer, had overleaped the hedge, and run to the constable of an adjoining

adjoining village for assistance. Accordingly, before Crabshaw could be properly remounted, the peace officer arrived with his posse ; and by the corporal was charged with Sir Launcelot and his squire, as two highwaymen. The constable, astonished at the martial figure of the knight, and intimidated at sight of the havock he had made, contented himself with standing at a distance, displaying the badge of his office, and reminding the knight that he represented his majesty's person. Sir Launcelot, seeing the poor man in great agitation, assured him that his design was to enforce, not violate the laws of his country ; and that he and his squire would attend him to the next justice of the peace ; but, in the mean time, he, in his turn, charged the peace-officer with the serjeant and the drummer, who had begun the fray. The justice had been a pettifogger, and was a sycophant to a nobleman in the neighbourhood, who had a post at court. He therefore thought he should oblige his patron,

by shewing his respect for *the military*; and treated our knight with the most boorish insolence; but refused to admit him into his house, until he had surrendered all his weapons of offence to the constable. Sir Launcelot and his squire being found the aggressors, the justice insisted upon making out their mittimus, if they did not find bail immediately; and could hardly be prevailed upon to agree that they should remain at the house of the constable, who, being a publican, undertook to keep them in safe custody, until the knight could write to his steward. Mean while he was bound over to the peace; and the serjeant with his drummer were told they had a good action against him for assault and battery, either by information or indictment. They were not, however, so fond of the law as the justice seemed to be. Their sentiments had taken a turn in favour of Sir Launcelot during the course of his examination, by which it appeared that he was really a gentleman of fashion and fortune; and they resolved

resolved to compromise the affair without the intervention of his worship. Accordingly, the serjeant repaired to the constable's house, where the knight was lodged ; and humbled himself before his honour, protesting with many oaths, that if he had known his quality he would have beaten the drummer's brains about his ears, for presuming to give his honour or his horse the least disturbance ; thof the fellow, he believed, was sufficiently punished in being a cripple for life. Sir Launcelot admitted of his apologies ; and taking compassion on the fellow who had suffered so severely for his folly, resolved to provide for his maintenance. Upon the representation of the parties to the justice, the warrant was next day discharged ; and the knight returned to his own house, attended by the serjeant and the drummer mounted on horseback, the recruits being left to the corporal's charge.

“ The halberdeer found the good effects of Sir Launcelot's liberality ; and his com-

328 THE ADVENTURES OF

panion being rendered unfit for his majesty's service by the heels of Gilbert, is now entertained at Greavesbury-hall, where he will probably remain for life. As for Crabshaw, his master gave him to understand, that if he did not think him pretty well chastised for his presumption and flight by the discipline he had undergone in the last two adventures, he would turn him out of his service with disgrace. Timothy said he believed it would be the greatest favour he could do him to turn him out of a service in which he knew he should be rib-roasted every day, and murdered at last.—In this situation were things at Greavesbury-hall about a month ago, when I crossed the country to Ferry-bridge, where I met my uncle: probably, this is the first incident of their second excursion; for the distance between this here house and Sir Launcelot's estate, does not exceed fourscore or ninety miles.”

C H A P.

C H A P. VI.

*In which the reader will perceive that in some cases
madness is catching.*

M R. Clarke having made an end of his narrative, the surgeon thanked him for the entertainment he had received ; and Mr. Ferret, shrugged up his shoulders in silent disapprobation. As for captain Crowe, who used at such pauses to pour in a broadside of dismembered remarks, linked together like chain-shot, he spoke not a syllable for some time ; but lighting a fresh pipe at the candle, began to roll such voluminous clouds of smoke as in an instant filled the whole apartment, and rendered himself invisible to the whole company. Though he thus shrouded himself from their view, he did not long remain concealed from their hearing. They first perceived a strange dissonant cackle, which

130 THE ADVENTURES OF

the doctor knew to be a sea-laugh, and this was followed by an eager exclamation of “ Rare pastime, strike my yards and top-masts ! — I’ve a good mind — why shouldn’t—many a losing voyage I’ve— smite my taffrel but I wool—” By this time, he had relaxed so much in his fumigation, that the tip of his nose and one eye re-appeared ; and as he had drawn his wig forwards so as to cover his whole forehead, the figure that now saluted their eyes was much more ferocious and terrible than the fire-breathing Chimæra of the ancients. Notwithstanding this dreadful appearance, there was no indignation in his heart ; but, on the contrary, an agreeable curiosity, which he was determined to gratify. Addressing himself to Mr. Fillet, “ Prithee, doctor (said he) can’t tell, whether a man, without being rated a lord o~~or~~ baron, or what d’ye call um, d’ye see, mayn’t take to the highway in the way of a frolick, d’ye see ?—adad ! for my own part, brother, I’m resolved as how to cruise a bit in

in the way of an arrant—if so be as I can't at once be commander, mayhap I may be bore upon the books as petty officer or the like, d'ye see."

"Now, the Lord forbid! (cried Clarke with tears in his eyes) I'd rather see you dead than brought to such a dilemma."

"Mayhap, thou would'st (answered the uncle); for then, my lad, there would be some picking—aha! do'st thou tip me the traveller, my boy"—Tom assured him he scorned any such mercenary views. "I am only concerned (said he) that you should take any step that might tend to the disgrace of yourself or your family; and I say again I had rather die than live to see you reckoned any otherwise than compos."—"Die and be damned! you shambling, half-timber'd son of a — (cried the choleric Crowe) do'st talk to me of keeping a reckoning and compass! —I could keep a reckoning, and box my compass, long enough before thy keel-stone was laid—Sam Crowe is not come

here to ask thy counsel how to steer his course"—“Lord, sir, (resumed the nephew) consider what people will say—all the world will think you mad”—“Set thy heart at ease, Tom, (cried the seaman) I'll have a trip to and again in this here channel. Mad! what then? I think for my part one half of the nation is mad—and the other not very sound—I don't see why I han't as good a right to be mad as another man—but, doctor, as I was saying, I'd be bound to you, if you would direct me where I can buy that same tackle that an arrant must wear. As for the matter of the long pole headed with iron, I'd never desire a better than a good boat-hook; and I could make a special good target of that there tin sconce that holds the candle—mayhap any blacksmith will hammer me a scull-cap, d'ye see, out of an old brass kettle: and I can call my horse by the name of my ship, which was *Muffy*.”

The surgeon was one of those wags who can laugh inwardly, without exhibiting the least

least outward mark of mirth or satisfaction. He at once perceived the amusement which might be drawn from this strange disposition of the sailor, together with the most likely means which could be used to divert him from such an extravagant pursuit. He therefore tipped Clarke the wink with one side of his face, while the other was very gravely turned to the captain, whom he addressed to this effect :—
“ It is not far from hence to Sheffield, where you might be fitted completely in half-a-day — then you must wake your armour in church or chappel, and be dubbed. As for this last ceremony, it may be performed by any person whatsoever. Don Quixote was dubbed by his landlord ; and there are many instances on record, of errants obliging and compelling the next person they met to cross their shoulders, and dub them knights. I myself would undertake to be your godfather ; and I have interest enough to procure the keys of the parish-church that stands hard by ; besides, this is the eve of St. Martin,
who

134 THE ADVENTURES OF

who was himself a knight-errant, and therefore a proper patron to a novitiate. I wish we could borrow Sir Launcelot's armour for the occasion."

Crowe, being struck with this hint, started up, and laying his fingers on his lips to enjoin silence, walked off softly on his tiptoes, to listen at the door of our knight's apartment, and judge whether or not he was asleep. Mr. Fillet took this opportunity to tell his nephew, that it would be in vain for him to combat this humour with reason and argument, but the most effectual way of diverting him from the plan of knight-errantry would be, to frighten him heartily while he should keep his vigil in the church. Towards the accomplishment of which purpose he craved the assistance of the misanthrope as well as the nephew. Clarke seemed to relish the scheme: and observed that his uncle, though endued with courage enough to face any human danger, had at bottom a strong fund of superstition, which

which he had acquired, or at least improved, in the course of a sea-life. Ferret, who perhaps would not have gone ten paces out of his road to save Crowe from the gallows, nevertheless, engaged as an auxiliary, merely in hope of seeing a fellow-creature miserable ; and even undertook to be the principal agent in this adventure. For this office, indeed, he was better qualified than they could have imagined : in the bundle which he kept under his great coat, there was, together with divers nostrums, a small vial of liquid phosphorus, sufficient, as he had already observed, to frighten a whole neighbourhood out of their senses. In order to concert the previous measures, without being overheard, these confederates retired with a candle and lanthorn into the stable ; and their backs were scarce turned, when captain Crowe came in loaded with pieces of the knight's armour, which he had conveyed from the apartment of Sir Launcelot, whom he had left fast asleep.

Under-

Understanding that the rest of the company were gone out for a moment, he could not resist the inclination he felt of communicating his intention to the landlady, who, with her daughter, had been too much engaged in preparing Crabshaw's supper, to know the purport of their conversation. The good woman, being informed of the captain's design to remain alone all night in the church, began to oppose it with all her rheotrick. She said it was setting his Maker at defiance, and a wilful running into temptation. She assured him all the country knew that the church was haunted by spirits and hobgoblins : that lights had been seen in every corner of it ; and a tall woman in white had one night appeared upon the top of the tower : that dreadful skrieks were often heard to come from the south aisle, where a murdered man had been buried : that she herself had seen the crois on the steeple all a-fire ; and one evening as she paffed a-horse back close by the stile at the entrance

trance into the church-yard, the horse stood still, sweating and trembling; and had no power to proceed until she had repeated the Lord's Prayer.

These remarks made a strong impression on the imagination of Crowe, who asked, in some confusion, if she had got that same prayer in print. She made no answer; but reaching the prayer-book from a shelf, and turning up the leaf, put it into his hand: then the captain, having adjusted his spectacles, began to read or rather spell aloud with equal eagerness and solemnity. He had refreshed his memory so well as to remember the whole; when the doctor, returning with his companions, gave him to understand that he had procured the key of the chancel, where he might watch his armour as well as in the body of the church; and that he was ready to conduct him to the spot. Crowe was not now quite so forward as he had appeared before to atchieve this adventure. He began to start objections with

with respect to the borrowed armour : he wanted to stipulate the comforts of a can of flip, and a candle's end, during his vigil ; and hinted something of the damage he might sustain from your malicious imps of darkness.

The doctor told him, the constitutions of chivalry absolutely required that he should be left in the dark alone, and fasting, to spend the night in pious meditations ; but if he had any fears which disturbed his conscience, he had much better desist, and give up all thoughts of knight-errantry, which could not consist with the least shadow of apprehension. The captain, stung by this remark, replied not a word ; but gathering up the armour into a bundle, threw it on his back, and set out for the place of probation, preceded by Clarke with the lanthorn. When they arrived at the church, Fillet, who had procured the key from the sexton, who was his patient, opened the door, and conducted our novice into the

the middle of the chancel, where the armour was deposited. Then bidding Crowe draw his hanger, committed him to the protection of heaven, assuring him he would come back, and find him either dead or alive by day-break, and perform the remaining part of the ceremony. So saying, he and the other associates shook him by the hand and took their leave, after the surgeon had tilted up the lanthorn, in order to take a view of his visage, which was pale and haggard.

Before the door was locked upon him, he called aloud, “ Hilloa ! doctor, hip— another word, d’ye see—” They forthwith returned, to know what he wanted, and found him already in a sweat. “ Heark ye, brother (said he, wiping his face) I do suppose as how one may pass away the time in whistling the black joke, or singing black-ey’d Susan, or some such sorrowful ditty.” “ By no means, (cried the doctor) such pastimes are neither suitable to the place, nor the occasion, which is

140. THE ADVENTURES OF

is altogether a religious exercise. If you have got any psalms by heart, you may sing a stave or two, or repeat the doxology. — “Would I had Tom Laverick here, (replied our novitiate) he would sing you anthems like a sea-mew—a had been a clerk a-shore—many’s the time and often I’ve given him a rope’s end for singing psalms in the larboard watch—would I had hired the son of a bitch to have taught me a cast of his office—but it cannot be holp, brother—if we can’t go large, we must haul upon a wind, as the saying is—if we can’t sing, we must pray.” The company again left him to his devotion, and returned to the public house, in order to execute the essential part of their project.

C H A P. VII.

In which the knight resumes his importance.

FILLET having borrowed a couple of sheets from the landlady, dressed the misanthrope and Tom Clarke in ghostly apparel, which was re-inforced by a few drops of liquid phosphorus, from Ferret's phial, rubbed on the fore-heads of the two adventurers. Thus equipped, they returned to the church with their conductor, who entered with them softly at an aisle which was opposite to a place where the novice kept watch. They stole unperceived through the body of the church; and though it was so dark that they could not distinguish the captain with the eye, they heard the sound of his steps, as he walked backwards and forwards on the pavement with uncommon expedition, and an ejaculation now and then escape in a murmur from his lips.

The triumvirate having taken their station, with a large pew in their front, the two ghosts uncovered their heads, which, by help of the phosphorus, exhibited a pale and lambent flame, extremely dismal and ghastly to the view; then Ferret, in a squeaking tone exclaimed, "Samuel Crowe! Samuel Crowe!" The captain hearing himself accosted in this manner, at such a time, and in such a place, replied, "Hilloah:" and turning his eyes towards the quarter whence the voice seemed to proceed, beheld the terrible apparition. This no sooner saluted his view, than his hair bristled up, his knees began to knock, and his teeth to chatter, while he cried aloud, "In the name of God, where are you bound, ho?" To this hail, the misanthrope answered, "We are the spirits of thy grandmother Jane and thy aunt Bridget."

At mention of these names, Crowe's terrors began to give way to his resentment, and he pronounced in a quick tone
of

•f surprize, mixed with indignation, “What d’ye want? what d’ye want? what d’ye want, ho ?” The spirit replied, “ We are sent to warn thee of thy fate.” “ From whence, ho ?” cried the captain, whose choler had by this time well nigh triumphed over his fear. “ From heaven,” said the voice. “ Ye lie, ye b—s of hell ! (did our novice exclaim) ye are damned for heaving me out of my right, five fathom and a half by the lead, in burning brimstone. Don’t I see the blue flames come out of your hawseholes—mayhap you may be the devil himself for aught I know—but I trust in the Lord, d’ye see—I never disrated a kinsman, d’ye see; so don’t come along side of me—put about on th’other tack, d’ye see—you need not clap hard aweather, for you’ll soon get to hell again with a flowing sail.”

So saying, he had recourse to his Pater-noster ; but perceiving the apparitions approach, he thundered out, “ Avaft,—avaft—sheer off, ye babes of hell, or I’ll be

144 THE ADVENTURES OF

be foul of your foreights." He accordingly sprung forwards with his hanger, and very probably would have set the spirits on their way to the other world, had not he fallen over a pew in the dark, and intangled himself so much among the benches, that he could not immediately recover his footing. The triumvirate took this opportunity to retire; and such was the precipitation of Ferret in his retreat, that he encountered a post, by which his right eye sustained considerable damage: a circumstance which induced him to inveigh bitterly against his own folly, as well as the impertinence of his companions, who had inveigled him into such a troublesome adventure. Neither he nor Clarke could be prevailed upon to revisit the novice. The doctor himself thought his disease was desperate; and, mounting his horse, returned to his own habitation.

Ferret, finding all the beds in the public house were occupied, composed himself to sleep

sleep in a Windsor-chair at the chimney corner ; and Mr. Clarke, whose disposition was extremely amorous, resolved to renew his practices on the heart of Dolly. He had reconnoitered the apartments in which the bodies of the knight and his squire were deposited, and discovered close by the top of the stair-case a sort of a closet or hovel just large enough to contain a truckle-bed, which, from some other particulars, he supposed to be the bed-chamber of his beloved Dolly, who had by this time retired to her repose. Full of this idea, and instigated by the daemon of desire, Mr. Thomas crept softly up stairs ; and lifting the latch of the closet-door, his heart began to palpitate with joyous expectation : but before he could breathe the gentle effusions of his love, the supposed damsel started up, and seizing him by the collar with an Herculean gripe, uttered, in the voice of Crabshaw, “ It wa’n’t for nothing that I dreamed of Newgate, firrah ; but I’d have thee to know, an errant squire is not to be

robbed by such a peddling thief as thee—here I'll howld the vast, an the devil were in thy doublet——help! murder! vire! help!"

It was impossible for Mr. Clarke to disengage himself, and equally impracticable to speak in his own vindication; so that here he stood trembling and half throttled, until the whole house being alarmed, the landlady and her ostler ran up stairs with a candle. When the light rendered objects visible, an equal astonishment prevailed on all sides: Crabshaw was confounded at sight of Clarke, whose person he well knew; and releasing him instantly from his grasp, " Bodikins! (cried he) I believe as how this hawse is haunted——who thought to meet with Measter Laayer Clarke at midnight, and so far from hoam." The landlady could not comprehend the meaning of this encounter; nor could Tom conceive how Crabshaw had transported himself hither from the room below, in which he saw him quietly reposèd. Yet nothing was more

more easy than to explain this mystery : the apartment below was the chamber which the hostess and her daughter reserved for their own convenience ; and this particular having been intimated to the squire while he was at supper, he had resigned the bed quietly, and been conducted hither in the absence of the company. Tom, recollecting himself as well as he could, professed himself of Crabshaw's opinion, that the house was haunted, declaring that he could not well account for his being there in the dark ; and leaving those that were assembled to discuss this knotty point, retired down stairs, in hope of meeting with his charmer, whom accordingly he found in the kitchen just risen, and wrapped in a loose dishabille.

The noise of Crabshaw's cries had awakened and aroused his master, who, rising suddenly in the dark, snatched up his sword that lay by his bed-side, and hastened to the scene of tumult, where all their mouths were opened at once, to explain the cause of the disturbance, and

make an apology for breaking his honour's rest. He said nothing ; but taking the candle in his hand, beckoned to his squire to follow him into his apartment, resolving to arm and take horse immediately. Crabshaw understood his meaning ; and while he shuffled on his cloaths, yawning hideously all the while, wished the lawyer at the devil for having visited him so unseasonably ; and even cursed himself for the noise he had made, in consequence of which he forefaw he should now be obliged to forfeit his night's rest, and travel in the dark, exposed to the inclemencies of the weather. " Pox rot thee, Tom Clarke, for a wicked laayer ! (said he to himself) hadst thou been hanged at Battleney-tide, I should this night have slept in peace ; that I should—an I would there was a blister on this plaguy tongue of mine for making such a hollowballoo ; that I do—five gallons of cold water has my poor belly been drenched with since night fell ; so as my reins and my liver are all one as if they were turned

turned into ice, and my whole harslet shakes and shivers like a vial of quicksilver. I have been dragged, half drowned like a rotten ewe, from the bottom of a river; and who knows but I may be next dragged quite dead from the bottom of a coal-pit—if so be as I am, I shall go to hell to be sure, for being confarned like in my own moorder; that I will: so I will: for a plague on it, I had no busness with the vagaries of this crazy-pated measter of mine, a pox on him, say I.”

He had just finished this soliliquy as he entered the apartment of his master, who desired to know what was become of his armour. Timothy, understanding that it had been left in the room when the knight undressed, began to scratch his head in great perplexity; and at last declared it was his opinion that it must have been carried off by witchcraft. Then he related his adventure with Tom Clarke, who he said was conveyed to his bedside he knew not how;

150 THE ADVENTURES OF

how ; and concluded, with affirming they were no better than Papishes, who did not believe in witchcraft. Sir Launcelot could not help smiling at his simplicity ; but assuming a peremptory air, he commanded him to fetch the armour without delay, that he might afterwards saddle the horses, in order to prosecute their journey. Timothy retired in great tribulation to the kitchen, where finding the misanthrope, whom the noise had also disturbed, and still impressed with the notion of his being a conjurer, he offered him a shilling if he would cast a figure, and let him know what was become of his master's armour.

Ferret, in hope of producing more mischief, informed him without hesitation, that one of the company had conveyed it into the chancel of the church, where he would now find it deposited ; at the same time presenting him with the key, which Mr. Fillet had left in his custody. The squire, who was none of those who set hobgoblins at defiance, being afraid to enter

the church alone at these hours, bargained with the ostler to accompany and light him with a lanthorn. Thus attended, he advanced to the place, where the armour lay in a heap, and loaded it upon the back of his attendant without molestation, the launce being shouldered over the whole. In this equipage they were just going to retire, when the ostler hearing a noise at some distance, wheeled about with such velocity, that one end of the spear saluting Crabshaw's pate, the poor squire measured his length on the ground; and crushing the lanthorn in his fall, the light was extinguished. The other, terrified at these effects of his own sudden motion, threw down his burthen, and would have betaken himself to flight, had not Crabshaw laid fast hold on his leg, that he might not be deserted. The sound of the pieces clattering on the pavement, roused captain Crowe from a trance or slumber in which he had lain since the apparition vanished; and he hollowed, or rather bellowed, with

vast vociferation. Timothy and his friend were so intimidated by this terrific strain, that they thought no more of the armour, but ran home arm in arm, and appeared in the kitchen with all the marks of horror and consternation.

When Sir Launcelot came forth wrapped in his cloak, and demanded his arms, Crabshaw declared that the devil had them in his possession ; and this assertion was confirmed by the ostler, who pretended to know the devil by his roar. Ferret sat in his corner, maintaining the most mortifying silence, and enjoying the impatience of the knight, who in vain requested an explanation of this mystery. At length his eyes began to lighten, when seizing Crabshaw in one hand, and the ostler in the other, he swore by heaven he would dash their souls out, and raze the house to the foundation, if they did not instantly disclose the particulars of this transaction. The good woman fell on her knees, protesting, in the name of the Lord, that she
was

was innocent as the child unborn, thof she had lent the captain a Prayer-book to learn the Lord's Prayer, a lanthorn and candle to light him to the church, and a couple of clean sheets for the use of the other gentlemen. The knight was more and more puzzled by this declaration; when Mr. Clarke, coming into the kitchen, presented himself with a low obeisance to his old patron.

Sir Launcelot's anger was immediately converted into surprise. He set at liberty the squire and the ostler; and stretching out his hand to the lawyer, "My good friend Clarke, (said he) how came you hither?—Can you solve this knotty point which hath involved us all in such confusion?"

Tom forthwith began a very circumstantial recapitulation of what had happened to his uncle; in what manner he had been disappointed of the estate; how he had accidentally seen his honour, been enamoured of his character, and became

ambitious of following his example. Then he related the particulars of the plan which had been laid down to divert him from his design, and concluded with assuring the knight, that the captain was a very honest man, though he seemed to be a little disordered in his intellects. "I believe it, (replied Sir Launcelot): madness and honesty are not incompatible—indeed I feel it by experience."

Tom proceeded to ask pardon, in his uncle's name, for his having made so free with the knight's armour; and begged his honour, for the love of God, would use his authority with Crowe—that he might quit all thoughts of knight-errantry, for which he was by no means qualified; for being totally ignorant of the laws of the land, he would be continually committing trespasses, and bring himself into trouble. He said in case he should prove refractory, he might be apprehended by virtue of a friendly warrant, for having feloniously carried off the knight's accoutrements.

coutrements. “ Taking away another man’s moveables, (said he) and personal goods against the will of the owner, is *furtum* and felony according to the statute; different indeed from robbery, which implies putting in fear on the king’s highway, *in alta via regio violenter, & felonice captum & asportatum in magnum terrorem, &c.* for if the robbery be laid in the indictment as done *in quadam via pedestri*, in a foot-path, the offender will not be ousted of his clergy. It must be *in alta via regia*; and your honour will please to take notice, that robberies committed on the river Thames are adjudged as done *in alta via regia*; for the king’s highstream is all the same as the king’s highway.”

Sir Launcelot could not help smiling at Tom’s learned investigation. He congratulated him on the progress he had made in the study of the law. He expressed his concern at the strange turn the captain had taken; and promised to use his influence in persuading him to desist from the pre-

posturous design he had formed. The lawyer thus assured, repaired immediately to the church, accompanied by the squire, and held a parley with his uncle, who, when he understood that the knight in person desired a conference, surrendered up the arms quietly, and returned to the public-house. Sir Launcelot received the honest seamen with his usual complacency; and perceiving great discomposure in his looks, said, he was sorry to hear he had passed such a disagreeable night to so little purpose. Crowe, having recruited his spirits with a bumper of brandy, thanked him for his concern, and observed that he had passed many a hard night in his time; but such another as this, he would not be bound to weather for the command of the whole British navy. "I have seen Davy Jones in the shape of a blue flame, d'ye see, hopping to and fro, on the spritsail yard arm; and I've seen your Jacks o'the Lanthorn, and Wills o'the Wisp, and many such spirits, both by

by sea and land : but, to-night I've been boarded by all the devils and damn'd souls in hell, squeaking and squalling, and glimmering and glaring. Bounce went the door—crack went the pew—crash came the tackle—white-sheeted ghosts dancing in one corner by the glow-worm's light—black devils hobbling in another—Lord have mercy upon us ! and I was hailed, Tom, I was, by my grand-mother Jane, and my aunt Bridget, d'ye fee—a couple of damn'd—but they're roasting ; that's one comfort, my lad."

When he had thus disburthened his conscience, Sir Launcelot introduced the subject of the new occupation at which he aspired. " I understand, (said he) that you are desirous of treading the paths of errantry, which, I assure you, are thorny and troublesome. Nevertheless, as your purpose is to exercise your humanity and benevolence, so your ambition is commendable. But towards the practice of chivalry, there is something more required than

158. THE ADVENTURES OF

than the virtues of courage and generosity. A knight-errant ought to understand the sciences, to be master of ethics or morality, to be well versed in theology, a complete casuist, and minutely acquainted with the laws of his country. He should not only be patient of cold, hunger, and fatigue, righteous, just, and valiant; but also chaste, religious, temperate, polite, and conversable; and have all the passions under the rein, except love, whose empire he should submissively acknowledge. He said this was the very essence of chivalry, and no man had ever made such a profession of arms, without having having first placed his affection upon some beauteous object, for whose honour, and at whose command, he would chearfully encounter the most dreadful perils.

He took notice that nothing could be more irregular than the manner in which Crowe had attempted to keep his vigil: for he had never served his noviciate—he had not prepared himself with abstinence

nence and prayer—he had not provided a qualified godfather for the ceremony of dubbing—he had no armour of his own to wake; but, on the very threshold of chivalry, which is the perfection of justice, had unjustly purloined the arms of another knight: that this was a meer mockery of a religious institution; and therefore unpleasing in the sight of heaven; witness, the demons and hobgoblins that were permitted to disturb and torment him in his trial.

Crowe having listened to these remarks, with earnest attention, replied, after some hesitation: “I am bound to you, brother, for your kind and christian counsel—I doubt as how I’ve steered by a wrong chart, d’ye see—as for the matter of the sciences, to be sure, I know plain sailing and Mercator; and am an indifferent good seaman, thof I say it that should not say it: but as to all the rest, no better than the viol block or the geer capstan. Religion I han’t much over-hauled; and we tars

laugh

160 THE ADVENTURES OF

laugh at your polite conversation, thof, mayhap, we can chaunt a few ballads to keep the hands awake in the night watch; then for chastity, brother, I doubt that's not to be expected in a sailor just come ashore after a long voyage—sure all those poor hearts won't be damned for steering in the wake of Nature. As for a sweet-heart, Bet Mizen of St. Catherine's would fit me to a hair—she and I are old messmates; and—what signifies talking, brother, she knows already the trim of my vessel, d'ye see." He concluded with saying, "He thought he wa'n't too old to learn; and if Sir Launcelot would take him in tow, as his tender, he would stand by him all weathers, and it should not cost his consort a farthing's expence."

The knight said, he did not think himself of consequence enough to have such a pupil; but should always be ready to give him his best advice, as a specimen of which he exhorted him to weigh all the circumstances, and deliberate calmly and leisurely.

leisurely, before he actually engaged in such a boisterous profession, assuring him that if, at the end of three months, his resolution should continue, he would take upon himself the office of his instructor. In the mean time, he gratified the hostess for his lodging, put on his armour, took leave of the company, and mounting Bronzomarte, proceeded southerly, being attended by his squire Crabshaw, grumbling, on the back of Gilbert.

C H A P. VIII.

Which is within a hair's breadth of proving highly interesting.

LEAVING captain Crowe and his nephew for the present, though they and even the misanthrope will re-appear in due season, we are now obliged to attend the progress of the knight, who proceeded in a southerly direction, insensible of the storm that blew, as well as of the darkness, which was horrible. For some time Crabshaw ejaculated curses in silence; till at length his anger gave way to his fear, which waxed so strong upon him, that he could no longer resist the desire of alleviating it, by entering into a conversation with his master. By way of introduction, he gave Gilbert the spur, directing him towards the flank of Bronzomarte, which he encountered with such a shock, that the knight was almost dismounted. When Sir

Launcelot, with some warmth, asked the reason of this attack, the squire replied in these words : “ The devil, (God bless us) mun be playing his pranks with Gilbert too, as sure as I’m a living soul !—I’se wage a teaser, the foul fiend has left the seaman, and got into Gilbert, than he has —when a has passed through an ass and a horse, I’se marvel what beaste a will get into next.” “ Probably into a mule, (said the knight;) in that case you will be in some danger—but I can, at any time, dispossess you with a horsewhip.”—“ Aye, aye, (answered Timothy) your honour has a mortal good hand at giving a flap with a fox’s tail, as the saying is—’tis a wonderment you did not try your hand on that there wifeacre that stole your honour’s harness, and wants to be an arrant with a murrain to ‘un—Lord help his fool’s head ! it becomes him as a sow doth a cart-saddle.” “ There is no guilt in infirmity (said the knight;) I punish the vicious only.” “ I would your honour would punish Gilbert then,

164 THE ADVENTURES OF

then, (cried the squire) for 'tis the most vicious tuoad that ever I laid a leg over—but as to that same seafaring man, what may his distemper be?" "Madness;" (answered Sir Launcelot.) "Bodikins, (exclaimed the squire) I doubt as how other volks are leame of the same leg—but a'n't vor such small gentry as he to be mad: they mun leave that to their betters." "You seem to hint at me, Crabshaw: do you really think I am mad?" "I may say as how I have looked your honour in the mouth; and a sorry dog should I be, if I did not know your humours as well as I know e'er a beast in the steable at Greavesbury-hall." "Since you are so well acquainted with my madness, (said the knight) what opinion have you of yourself, who serve and follow a lunatic?" "I hope I han't served your honour for nothing, but I shall inherit some of your cast vagaries—when your honour is pleased to be mad, I should be very sorry to be found right in my senses.—

Timothy

Timothy Crabshaw will never eat the bread of unthankfulness—It shall never be said of him that he was wiser than his measter: as for the matter of following a madman, we may say your honour's face is made of a fiddle; every one that looks on you loves you." This compliment the knight returned by saying, " If my face is a fiddle, Crabshaw, your tongue is a fiddle-stick that plays upon it—yet your music is very disagreeable—you don't keep time." " Nor you neither, measter, (cried Timothy) or we shoudn't be here wandering about under cloud of night, like sheep-stealers, or evil spirits with troubled consciences."

Here the discourse was interrupted by a sudden disaster, in consequence of which the squire uttered an inarticulate roar that startled the knight himself, who was very little subject to the sensation of fear: but his surprise was changed into vexation when he perceived Gilbert without a rider passing by, and kicking his heels with great agility.

lity. He forthwith turned his steed, and, riding back a few paces, found Crabshaw rising from the ground. When he asked what was become of his horse, he answered in a wimpering tone, “Horse! would I could once see him fairly carrion for the hounds—for my part I believe as how ‘tis no horse but a devil incarnate; and yet I’ve been worse mounted, that I have—I’d like to have rid a horse that was foaled of an acorn.”

This accident happened in a hollow way, overshadowed with trees, one of which the storm had blown down, so that it lay over the road, and one of its boughs projecting horizontally, encountered the squire as he trotted along in the dark. Chancing to hitch under his long chin, he could not disengage himself; but hung suspended like a flitch of bacon; while Gilbert, pushing forward, left him dangling, and, by his awkward gambols, seemed to be pleased with the joke. This capricious animal was not retaken without the personal endeavours of
the

the knight : for Crabshaw absolutely refusing to budge a foot from his honour's side, he was obliged to alight, and fasten Bronzomarte to a tree : then they set out together, and with some difficulty found Gilbert with his neck stretched over a five-barred gate, snuffing up the morning-air. The squire, however, was not remounted, without having first undergone a severe reprehension from his master, who upbraided him with his cowardice, threatened to chastise him on the spot, and declared that he would divorce his dastardly soul from his body ; should he ever be incommoded or affronted with another instance of his base-born apprehension.

Though there was some risque in carrying on the altercation at this juncture, Timothy having bound up his jaws, could not withstand the inclination he had to confute his master. He therefore, in a muttering accent, protested that if the knight would give him leave, he should prove that his honour had tied a knot with his tongue

tongue which he could not untie with all his teeth. "How, caitiff, (cried Sir Launcelot) presume to contend with me in argument!" "Your mouth is scarce shut, (said the other) since you declared that a man was not to be punished for madness, because it was a distemper: now I will maintain that cowardice is a distemper as well as madness; for nobody would be afraid if he could help it." "There is more logic in that remark (resumed the knight) than I expected from your clod-pate, Crabshaw: but I must explain the difference between cowardice and madness. Cowardice, tho' sometimes the effect of natural imbecility, is generally a prejudice of education, or bad habit contracted from misinformation, or misapprehension, and may certainly be cured by experience, and the exercise of reason: but this remedy cannot be applied in madness, which is a privation or disorder of reason itself." "So is cowardice, as I'm a living soul, (exclaimed the squire) don't you say a man is frightened

ened out of his senses ? for my peart, measter, I can neither see nor hear, much less argufy when I'm in such a quandary : wherefore, I believe, odds bodikins ! that cowardice and madnes^s are both distempers, and differ no more than the hot and cold fits of an ague. When it teakes your honour, you're all heat and fire and fury, Lord bless us ! but when it catches poor Tim, he's cold and dead-hearted, he sheakes and shivers like an aspen-leaf, that he does." " In that case, (answered the knight) I shall not punish you for the dis-temper which you cannot help, but for enga-
g-ing in a service expos'd to perils, when you knew your own infirmity : in the same manner as a man deserves punishment, who enlists himself for a soldier, while he labours under any secret disease." " At that rate (said the squire) my bread is like to be rarely buttered o'both sides, I faith. But, I hope, as by the blessing of God I have run mad, so I shall in good time grow valiant, under your honour's precept and example."

By this time a very disagreeable night was succeeded by a fair, bright morning, and a market-town appeared at the distance of three or four miles, when Crabshaw, having no longer the fear of hobgoblins before his eyes, and being moreover cheered by the sight of a place where he hoped to meet with comfortable entertainment, began to talk big, to expatiate on the folly of being afraid, and finally set all danger at defiance ; when all of a sudden he was presented with an opportunity of putting in practice those new adopted maxims. In an opening between two lanes, they perceived a gentleman's coach stopped by two highwaymen on horseback, one of whom advanced to reconnoitre and keep the coast clear, while the other exacted contribution from the travellers in the coach. He who acted as sentinel, no sooner saw our adventurer appearing from the lane, than he rode up with a pistol in his hand, and ordered him to halt on pain of immediate death.

To this peremptory mandate the knight made no other reply than charging him with

with such impetuosity that he was unhorsed in a twinkling, and lay sprawling on the ground, seemingly sore bruised with his fall. Sir Launcelot commanding Timothy to alight and secure the prisoner, couched his lance, and rode full speed at the other highwayman, who was not a little disturbed at sight of such an apparition. Nevertheless, he fired his pistol without effect; and, clapping spurs to his horse, fled away at full gallop. The knight pursued him with all the speed that Bronzomarte could exert; but the robber being mounted on a swift hunter, kept him at a distance; and, after a chace of several miles, escaped thro' a wood so entangled with coppice, that Sir Launcelot thought proper to desist. He then, for the first time, recollectec the situation in which he had left the other thief, and remembering to have heard a female shriek, as he passed by the coach-window, resolved to return with all expedition, that he might make a proffer of his service to the lady, according to the obligation of

knight-errantry. But he had lost his way ; and after an hour's ride, during which he traversed many a field, and circled divers hedges, he found himself in the market-town aforementioned. Here the first object that presented itself to his eyes, was Crabshaw, on foot, surrounded by a mob, tearing his hair, stamping with his feet, and roaring out in manifest distraction, “ Shew me the mayor, (for the love of God) shew me the mayor !—O Gilbert, Gilbert ! a murrain take thee, Gilbert ! sure thou was foaled for my destruction !”

From these exclamations, and the antic dress of the squire, the people, not without reason, concluded that the poor soul had lost his wits ; and the beadle was just going to secure him, when the knight interposed, and at once attracted the whole attention of the populace. Timothy, seeing his master, fell down on his knees, crying, “ The thief has run away with Gilbert—you may pound me into a peast, as the saying is : but now I'fe a^s mad as your wor-ship ;

ship; an't afeard of the devil and all his works." Sir Launcelot desiring the beadle would forbear, was instantly obeyed by that officer, who had no inclination to put the authority of his place in competition with the power of such a figure armed at all points, mounted on a fiery steed, and ready for the combat. He ordered Crabshaw to attend him to the next inn, where he alighted; then taking him into a separate apartment, demanded an explanation of the unconnected words he had uttered: The squire was in such agitation, that, with infinite difficulty, and by dint of a thousand different questions, his master learned the adventure to this effect: Crabshaw, according to Sir Launcelot's command, had alighted from his horse, and drawn his cut-las, in hope of intimidating the discomfited robber into a tame surrender, though he did not at all relish the nature of the service: but the thief was neither so much hurt, nor so tame as Timòthy had imagined. He started on his feet with his pistol

still in his hand; and presenting it to the squire, swore with dreadful imprecations, that he would blow his brains out in an instant. Crabshaw, unwilling to hazard the trial of this experiment, turned his back, and fled with great precipitation; while the robber, whose horse had run away, mounted Gilbert, and rode off across the country. It was at this period, that two footmen belonging to the coach, who had stayed behind to take their morning's whet, at the inn where they lodged, came up to the assistance of the ladies, armed with blunderbusses; and the carriage proceeded, leaving Timothy alone in distraction and despair. He knew not which way to turn; and was afraid of remaining on the spot, lest the robbers should come back and revenge themselves upon him for the disappointment they had undergone. In this distress, the first thought that occurred, was to make the best of his way to the town, and demand the assistance of the civil magistrate towards the retrieval of what he
had

had lost: a design which he executed in such a manner, as justly entailed upon him the imputation of lunacy.

While Timothy stood fronting the window, and answering the interrogations of his master, he suddenly exclaimed, "Bodikins! there's Gilbert!" and sprung into the street with incredible agility. There finding his strayed companion brought back by one of the footmen who attended the coach, he imprinted a kiss on his forehead; and hanging about his neck, with the tears in his eyes, hailed his return with the following salutation: "Art thou come back, my darling? ah Gilbert, Gilbert! a pize upon thee! thou hadst like to have been a dear Gilbert to me! how couldst thou break the heart of thy old friend, who has known thee from a colt? seven years next graps have I fed thee and bred thee; provided thee with sweet hay, delicate corn, and fresh litter, that thou mought lie warm, dry, and comfortable. Ha'n't I currycombed thy carcase 'till it was as sleek

as a sloe, and cherished thee as the apple of mine eye ? for all that thou hast played me an hundred dog's-tricks ; biting, and kicking, and plunging, as if the devil was in thy body ; and now thou couldst run away with a thief, and leave me to be fleā'd alive by master : what canst thou say for thyself, thou cruel, hard-hearted, unchristian tuoad ?”

To this tender expostulation, which afforded much entertainment to the boys, Gilbert answered not one word ; but seemed altogether insensible to the careffes of Timothy, who forthwith led him into the stable. On the whole, he seems to have been an unsocial animal : for it does not appear that he ever contracted any degree of intimacy, even with Bronzomarte, during the whole course of their acquaintance and fellowship. On the contrary, he has been more than once known to signify his aversion by throwing out behind, and other eruptive marks of contempt for that elegant charger, who excelled him as much

much in personal merit, as his rider Timothy was outshone by his all-accomplished master. While the squire accommodated Gilbert in the stable, the knight sent for the footman who had brought him back; and, having presented him with a liberal acknowledgment, desired to know in what manner the horse had been retrieved.

The stranger satisfied him in this particular, by giving him to understand, that the highwayman, perceiving himself pursued across the country, plied Gilbert so severely with whip and spur, that the animal resented the usage, and being besides, perhaps, a little struck with remorse for having left his old friend Crabshaw, suddenly halted, and stood stock still, notwithstanding all the stripes and tortures he underwent; or if he moved at all, it was in a retrograde direction. The thief, seeing all his endeavours ineffectual, and himself in danger of being overtaken,

I 5 wisely

178 THE ADVENTURES OF

wisely quitted his acquisition, and fled into the bosom of a neighbouring wood.

Then the knight inquired about the situation of the lady in the coach, and offered himself as her guard and conductor : but was told that she was already safely lodged in the house of a gentleman at some distance from the road. He likewise learned that she was a person disordered in her senses, under the care and tuition of a widow lady her relation ; and that in a day or two they should pursue their journey northward to the place of her habitation. After the footman had been some time dismissed, the knight recollect^{ed} that he had forgot to ask the name of the person to whom he belonged ; and began to be uneasy at this omission, which indeed was more interesting than he could imagine : for an explanation of this nature would in all likelihood have led to a discovery, that the lady in the coach was no other than Miss Aurelia Darnel, who seeing him unexpectedly in such an equi-

page

page and attitude, as he passed the coach, (for his helmet was off) had screamed with surprise and terror, and fainted away. Nevertheless, when she recovered from her swoon, she concealed the real cause of her agitation, and none of her attendants were acquainted with the person of Sir Launcelot.

The circumstances of the disorder, under which she was said to labour, shall be revealed in due course. In the mean time, our adventurer, though unaccountably affected, never dreamed of such an occurrence ; but being very much fatigued, resolved to indemnify himself for the loss of last night's repose ; and this happened to be one of the few things in which Crabshaw felt an ambition to follow his master's example.

C H A P. IX.

*Which may serve to shew, that true patriotism is
of no party.*

THE knight had not enjoyed his repose above two hours, when he was disturbed by such a variety of noises, as might have discomposed a brain of the firmest texture. The rumbling of carriages, and the rattling of horses' feet on the pavement, was intermingled with loud shouts, and the noise of fiddle, French-horn, and bagpipe. A loud peal was heard ringing in the church tower at some distance, while the inn resounded with clamour, confusion, and uproar.

Sir Launcelot being thus alarmed, started from his bed, and running to the window, beheld a cavalcade of persons well mounted, and distinguished by blue cockades. They were generally attired like jockies, with gold-laced hats and buckskin

buckskin breeches, and one of them bore a standard of blue silk, inscribed in white letters, **LIBERTY AND THE LANDED INTEREST.** He who rode at their head was a jolly figure, of a florid complexion and round belly, seemingly turned of fifty, and in all appearance, of a choleric disposition. As they approached the market-place they waved their hats, huzza'd, and cried aloud, **NO FOREIGN CONNECTIONS,—OLD ENGLAND FOR EVER.** This acclamation, however, was not so loud or universal, but that our adventurer could distinctly hear a counter-cry from the populace, of **NO SLAVERY,—NO POPISH PRETENDER.** An insinuation so ill relished by the cavaliers, that they began to ply their horsewhips among the multitude, and were, in their turn, saluted with a discharge or volley of stones, dirt, and dead cats; in consequence of which some teeth were demolished, and many furtouts defiled.

Our adventurer's attention was soon called off from this scene, to contemplate another

another procession of people on foot, adorned with bunches of orange ribbons, attended by a regular band of musick, playing *God save great George our king*, and headed by a thin, swarthy personage, of a sallow aspect and large goggling eyes, arched over with two semicircles of hair, or rather bristles, jet black, and frowzy. His apparel was very gorgeous, though his address was awkward; he was accompanied by the mayor, recorder, and heads of the corporation, in their formalities. His ensigns were known by the inscription, *Liberty of Conscience and the Protestant Succession*; and the people saluted him as he passed with repeated cheers, that seemed to prognosticate success. He had particularly ingratiated himself with the good women, who lined the street, and sent forth many ejaculatory petitions in his favour.

Sir Launcelot immediately comprehended the meaning of this solemnity: he perceived it was the prelude to the election of
a mem-

a member to represent the county in parliament, and he was seized with an eager desire to know the names and characters of the competitors. In order to gratify this desire, he made repeated application to the bell-rope that depended from the cieling of his apartment ; but this produced nothing, except the repetition of the words “ Coming, Sir,” which echoed from three or four different corners of the house. The waiters were so distracted by a variety of calls, that they stood motionless, in the state of the schoolman’s ass between two bundles of hay, incapable of determining where they should first offer their attendance.

Our knight’s patience was almost exhausted, when Crabshaw entered the room, in a very strange equipage : one half of his face appeared close shaved, and the other covered with lather, while the blood trickled in two rivulets from his nose, upon a barber’s cloth that was tucked under his chin ; he looked grim with indignation, and under his left arm carried his cutlafs,

unsheathed. Where he had acquired so much of the profession of knight-errantry we shall not pretend to determine ; but, certain it is, he fell on his knees before Sir Launcelot, crying, with an accent of rage and distraction, “ In the name of St. George for England, I beg a boon, Sir knight, and thy compliance I demand, before the peacock and the ladies.”

Sir Launcelot, astonished at this address, replied in a lofty strain, “ Valiant squire, thy boon is granted, provided it doth not contravene the laws of the land, and the constitutions of chivalry.” “ Then I crave leave (answered Crabshaw) to challenge and defy to mortal combat, that caitif barber who hath left me in this pitious condition ; and I vow by the peacock, that I will not shave my beard, until I have shaved his head from his shoulders : so may I thrive in the occupation of an arrant squire.”

Before his master had time to enquire into particulars, they were joined by a decent man in boots, who was likewise a traveller,

veller, and had seen the rise and progress of Timothy's disaster. He gave the knight to understand, that Crabshaw had sent for a barber, and already undergone one half of the operation, when the operator received the long expected message from both the gentlemen, who stood candidates at the election. The double summons was no sooner intimated to him, than he threw down his basin and retired with precipitation, leaving the squire in the fuds. Timothy incensed at this desertion, followed him with equal celerity into the street, where he collared the shaver, and insisted upon being entirely trimmed, on pain of the bastinado. The other finding himself thus arrested, and having no time to spare for altercation, lifted up his fist, and discharged it upon the snout of Crabshaw with such force, that the unfortunate aggressor was fain to bite the ground, while the victor hastened away, in hope of touching the double wages of corruption.

The knight being informed of these cir-

circumstances, told Timothy with a smile, that he should have liberty to defy the barber; but in the mean time, he ordered him to saddle Bronzomarte, and prepare for immediate service. While the squire was thus employed, his master engaged in conversation with the stranger, who happened to be a London dealer travelling for orders, and was well acquainted with the particulars which our adventurer wanted to know. It was from this communicative tradesman he learned, that the competitors were Sir Valentine Quickset and Mr. Isaac Vanderpelft ; the first a mere fox-hunter, who depended for success in this election upon his interest among the high-flying gentry ; the other a stock-jobber and contractor, of foreign extract, not without a mixture of Hebrew blood, immensely rich, who was countenanced by his grace of —, and supposed to have distributed large sums in securing a majority of votes among the yeomanry of the county, possessed of small freeholds, and copyholders, a great number of which

last

last resided in this borough. He said these were generally dissenters and weavers; and that the mayor, who was himself a manufacturer, had received a very considerable order for exportation, in consequence of which it was believed, he would support Mr. Vanderpelft with all his influence and credit.

Sir Launcelot, rouzed at this intelligence, called for his armour, which being buckled on in a hurry, he mounted his steed, attended by Crabshaw on Gilbert, and rode immediately into the midst of the multitude by which the hustings were surrounded, just as Sir Valentine Quickset began to harangue the people from an occasional theatre, formed of a plank supported by the upper board of the public stocks, and an inferior rib of a wooden cage pitched also for the accommodation of petty delinquents.

Though the singular appearance of Sir Launcelot at first sight attracted the eyes of all the spectators, yet they did not fail to yield

yield attention to the speech of his brother knight, Sir Valentine, which ran in the following strain: " Gentlemen vreeholders of this here county, I shan't pretend to meake a vine vlourishing speech,— I'm a plain spoken man, as you all know. I hope I shall always speak my maind without year or vavour, as the zaying is. 'Tis the way of the Quickssets—we are no upstarts, nor voreigners, nor have we any Jewish blood in our veins ;—we have lived in this here neighbourhood time out of maind, as you all know ; and posses an estate of vive thousand clear, which we spend at whoam, among you, in old English hospitality—All my vorevathers have been parliamentmen, and I can prove that ne'er a one o'um gave a zingle vote for the court since the revolution. Vor my own peart, I value not the ministry three skips of a louse, as the zaying is—I ne'er knew but one minister that was an honest man : and for all the rest I care not if they were hanged as high as Haman, with a pox to'un——I am, thank

ink God, a vree-born, true-hearted
nglishman, and a loyal, thoſe unworthy,
of the church—vor all they have done
r H——r, I'd vain know what they have
ne vor the church, with a vengeance—
r my own peart, I hate all vorreigners,
d vorreign measures, whereby this poor
tion is broken-backed with a dismal load
debt, and taxes rise so high that the
or cannot get bread. Gentlemen vree-
lders of this county, I value no minister
ig's end; if you will vavour me with
ur votes and interest, whereby I may be
urned, I'll engage one half of my estate
at I never cry yea to your shillings in the
und; but will croſſ the ministry in every
ing, as in duty bound, and as becomes an
neſt vreeholder in the ould interest—
it, if you sell your votes and your coun-
r for hire, you will be detested in this
re world, and damned in the next to all
ernity: so I leave every man to his own
onſcience."

This eloquent oration was received by
his

his own friends with loud peals of applause; which, however, did not discourage his competitor, who, confident of his own strength, ascended the rostrum, or, in other words, an old cask, set upright for the purpose. Having bowed all round to the audience, with a smile of gentle condescension, he told them how ambitious he was of the honour to represent this county in parliament ; and how happy he found himself in the encouragement of his friends, who had so unanimously agreed to support his pretensions. He said, over and above the qualification he possessed among them, he had fourscore thousand pounds in his pocket, which he had acquired by commerce, the support of the nation, under the present happy establishment, in defence of which he was ready to spend the last farthing. He owned himself a faithful subject to his majesty king George, sincerely attached to the protestant succession, in detestation and defiance of a popish, an abjured, and outlawed pretender ; and declared that

SIR LAUNCELOT GREAVES. 191

that he would exhaust his substance and his blood, if necessary, in maintaining the principles of the glorious revolution. “ This (cried he) is the solid basis and foundation upon which I stand.”

These last words had scarce proceeded from his mouth, when the head of the barrel or puncheon on which he stood, being frail and infirm, gave way ; so that down he went with a crash, and in a twinkling disappeared from the eyes of the astonished beholders. The fox-hunters perceiving his disaster, exclaimed, in the phrase and accent of the chace, Stole away ! stole away !” and, with hideous vociferation, joined in the sylvan chorus which the hunters hollow when the hounds are at fault.

The disaster of Mr. Vanderpelt was soon repaired by the assiduity of his friends, who disengaged him from the barrel in a trice, hoisted him on the shoulders of four strong weavers, and resenting the unmannerly exultation of their antagonists, began to form

themselves in order of battle. An obstinate fray would have undoubtedly ensued, had not their mutual indignation given way to their curiosity, at the motion of our knight, who had advanced into the middle between the two fronts, and waving his hand, as a signal for them to give attention, addressed himself to them with graceful demeanor, in these words: "Countrymen, friends, and fellow-citizens, you are this day assembled to determine a point of the utmost consequence to yourselves and your posterity; a point that ought to be determined by far other weapons than brutal force and factious clamour. You, the freemen of England, are the basis of that excellent constitution which hath long flourished the object of envy and admiration. To you belongs the inestimable privilege of choosing a delegate properly qualified to represent you in parliament. This is your birth-right, inherited from your ancestors, obtained by their courage, and sealed with their blood. It is not only your birth-right



right, which you should maintain in defiance of all danger, but also a sacred trust, to be executed with the most scrupulous care and fidelity. The person whom you trust ought not only to be endued with the most inflexible integrity, but should likewise possess a fund of knowledge that may enable him to act as a part of the legislature. He must be well acquainted with the history, the constitution, and the laws of his country: he must understand the forms of business, the extent of the royal prerogative, the privilege of parliament, the detail of government, the nature and regulation of the finances, the different branches of commerce, the politics that prevail, and the connexions that subsist among the different powers of Europe: for, on all these subjects, the deliberations of a house of commons occasionally turn: but these great purposes will never be answered by electing an illiterate savage, scarce qualified, in point of understanding, to act as a country justice of the peace, a man who

has never travelled beyond the excursion of a fox-chase, whose conversation never rambles farther than stable, his kennel, and his barn-yard ; who rejects decorum as degeneracy, mistakes rusticity for independence, ascertains his courage by leaping over gates and ditches, and finds his triumph on feats of drinking ; who holds his estate by a factious tenure, professes himself the blind slave of a party, without knowing the principles that gave it birth, or the motives by which it is actuated, and thinks that all patriotism consists in railing indiscriminately at ministers, and obstinately opposing every measure of the administration. Such a man, with no evil intentions of his own, might be used as a dangerous tool in the hands of desperate faction, by scattering the seeds of disaffection, embarrassing the wheels of government, and reducing the whole kingdom to anarchy."

Here the knight was interrupted by the shouts and acclamations of the Vanderpelites, who cried aloud, " Hear him ! hear him !

him ! long life to the iron-cased orator." This clamour subsiding, he prosecuted his harangue to the following effect :

" Such a man as I have described may be dangerous from ignorance, but is neither so mischievous nor so detestable as the wretch who knowingly betrays his trust, and sues to be the hireling and prostitute of a weak and worthless minister ; a scoundrel knave, without honour or principle, who belongs to no family whose example can reproach him with degeneracy ; who has no country to command his respect, no friends to engage his affection, no religion to regulate his morals, no conscience to restrain his iniquity, and who worships no God but Mammon. An insinuating miscreant, who undertakes for the dirtiest work of the vilest administration ; who practices national usury, receiving by wholesale the rewards of venality, and distributing the wages of corruption by retail."

In this place our adventurer's speech was drowned in the acclamations of the fox-

Hunters, who now triumphed in their turn, and hooted the speaker, exclaiming, "Well opened, Jowler—to 'un, to 'un again, Sweetlips! -hey, Merry, Whitefoot!" After a short interruption, he thus resumed his discourse :

" When such a caitiff presents himself to you, like the devil, with a temptation in his hand, avoid him as if he were in fact the devil—it is not the offering of disinterested love; for what should induce him, who has no affections, to love you, to whose persons he is an utter stranger? alas! it is not a benevolence, but a bribe. He wants to buy you at one market, that he may sell you at another. Without doubt his intention is to make an advantage of his purchase; and this aim he cannot accomplish, but by sacrificing, in some sort, your interest, your independency, to the wicked designs of a minister, as he can expect no gratification for the faithful discharge of his duty. But, even if he should not find an opportunity of selling you to advantage, the crime,

crime, the shame, the infamy, will still be the same in you, who, baser than the most abandoned prostitutes, have sold yourselves and your posterity for hire—for a poultry price, to be refunded with interest by some minister, who will indemnify himself out of your own pockets: for, after all, you are bought and sold with your own money—the miserable pittance you may now receive, is no more than a pitcher full of water thrown in to moisten the sucker of that pump which will drain you to the bottom. Let me therefore advise and exhort you, my countrymen, to avoid the opposite extremes of the ignorant clown and the designing courtier, and choose a man of honesty, intelligence, and moderation, who will—”

The doctrine of moderation was a very unpopular subject in such an assembly; and, accordingly, they rejected it as one man. They began to think the stranger wanted to set up for himself, a supposition that could not fail to incense both sides

equally, as they were both zealously engaged in their respective causes. The Whigs and the Tories joined against this intruder, who being neither, was treated like a monster, or chimæra in politics. They hissed, they hooted, and they hollowed ; they annoyed him with missiles of dirt, sticks, and stones ; they cursed, they threatened, and reviled, till at length his patience was exhausted.

“ Ungrateful and abandoned miscreants ! (he cried) I spoke to you as men and christians, as free-born Britons and fellow-citizens : but I perceive you are a pack of venal, infamous scoundrels, and I will treat you accordingly.” So saying, he brandished his lance, and riding into the thickest of the concourse, laid about him with such dexterity and effect, that the multitude was immediately dispersed, and he retired without further molestation.

The same good fortune did not attend squire Crabshaw in his retreat. The ludicrous singularity of his features, and the half-

half-mown crop of hair that bristled from one side of his countenance, invited some wags to make merry at his expence: one of them clapped a furze-bush under the tail of Gilbert, who, feeling himself thus stimulated *a posteriori*, kicked and plunged and capered in such a manner, that Timothy could hardly keep the saddle. In this commotion he lost his cap and his periwig, while the rabble pelted him in such a manner, that, before he could join his master, he looked like a pillar, or rather a pillory, of mud.

C H A P. X.

Which sheweth that he who plays at bowls, will sometimes meet with rubbers.

SIR Launcelot, boiling with indignation at the venality and faction of the electors, whom he had harangued to so little purpose, retired with the most deliberate disdain towards one of the gates of the town, on the outside of which his curiosity

K 4 was

was attracted by a concourse of people, in the midst of whom stood Mr. Ferret, mounted upon a stool, with a kind of fatchel hanging round his neck, and a vial displayed in his right hand, while he held forth to the audience in a very vehement strain of elocution.

Crabshaw thought himself happily delivered, when he reached the suburbs, and proceeded without halting; but his master mingled with the crowd, and heard the orator express himself to this effect: "Very likely, you may undervalue me and my medicine, because I don't appear upon a stage of rotten boards, in a shabby velvet coat and tye-periwig, with a foolish fellow in motley, to make you laugh by making wry faces: but I scorn to use these dirty arts for engaging your attention. These paultry tricks, *ad captandum vulgus*, can have no effect but on ideots, and if you are ideots I don't desire you should be my customers. Take notice, I don't address you in the stile of a mountebank, or a high German doctor; and

and yet the kingdom is full of mountebanks, empirics, and quacks. We have quacks in religion, quacks in physic, quacks in law, quacks in politics, quacks in patriotism, quacks in government; high German quacks that have blistered, sweated, bled, and purged the nation into an atrophy. But this is not all: they have not only evacuated her into a consumption, but they have intoxicated her brain, until she is become delirious: she can no longer pursue her own interest; or, indeed, rightly distinguish it: like the people of Nineveh, she can hardly tell her right hand from her left; but, as a changeling, is dazzled and delighted by an *ignis fatuus*, a Will o' the Wisp, an exhalation from the vilest materials in nature, that leads her astray through Westphalian bogs and deserts, and will one day break her neck over some barren rocks, or leave her sticking in some H——n pit or quagmire. For my part, if you have a mind to betray your country, I have no objection. In

selling yourselves and your fellow-citizens, you only dispose of a pack of rascals who deserve to be sold—If you sell one another, why should not I sell this here Elixir of Long Life, which if properly used, will protract your days till you shall have seen your country ruined? I shall not pretend to disturb your understandings, which are none of the strongest, with a hotch-potch of unintelligible terms, such as Aristotle's four principles of generation, unformed matter, privation, efficient and final causes. Aristotle was a pedantic blockhead, and still more knave than fool. The same censure we may safely put on that wise-acre Dioscorides, with his faculties of simples, his seminal, specific, and principal virtues; and that crazy commentator Galen, with his four elements, elementary qualities, his eight complexions, his harmonies, and discords. Nor shall I expatiate on the alkahest of that mad scoundrel Paracelsus, with which he pretended to reduce flints into salt; nor the *archæus* or *spiritus rector*

of

of that visionary Van Helmont, his simple, elementary water, his *gas*, ferments, and transmutations ; nor shall I enlarge upon the salt, sulphur, and oil, the *acidum vagum*, the mercury of metals, and the volatilized vitriol of other modern chymists, a pack of ignorant, conceited, knavish rascals, that puzzle your weak heads with such jargon, just as a Germanized m—r throws dust in your eyes, by lugging in and ringing the changes on the balance of power, the protestant religion, and your allies on the continent ; acting like the juggler, who picks your pocket while he dazzles your eyes and amuses your fancy with twirling his fingers, and reciting the gibberish of *bocus pocus* ; for, in fact, the balance of power is a mere chimera ; as for the protestant religion, nobody gives himself any trouble about it ; and allies on the continent we have none ; or at least, none that would raise an hundred men to save us from perdition, unless we paid an extravagant price for their assistance. But, to

return to this here Elixer of Long Life, I might embellish it with a great many high-sounding epithets ; but I disdain to follow the example of every illiterate vagabond, that from idleness turns quack, and advertises his nostrum in the public papers. I am neither a felonious dry-salter returned from exile, an hospital stump-turner, a decayed stay-maker, a bankrupt-printer, or insolvent debtor, released by act of parliament. I did not pretend to administer medicines, without the least tincture of letters, or stubborn wretches to perjure themselves in false affidavits of cures that were never performed ; nor employ a set of led-captains to harangue in my praise, at all public places. I was bred regularly to the profession of chymistry, and have tried all the processes of alchemy, and I may venture to say, that this here Elixir is, in fact, the *cbruson pepuromenon ek puros*, the visible, glorious, spiritual body, from whence all other beings derive their existence, as proceeding from their father the sun,

sun, and their mother the moon ; from the sun, as from a living and spiritual gold, which is mere fire ; consequently, the common and universal first created mover, from whence all moveable things have their distinct and particular motions ; and also from the moon, as from the wife of the sun, and the common mover of all sub-lunary things : and for as much as man is, and must be the comprehensive end of all creatures, and the microcosm, he is coun-felled in the Revelations to buy gold that is thoroughly fired, or rather pure fire, that he may become rich and like the sun ; as, on the contrary, he becomes poor, when he abuses the arsenical poison ; so that his silver, by the fire, must be calcined to a *caput mortuum*, which happens, when he will hold and retain the menstruum out of which he partly exists, for his own pro-perty, and doth not daily offer up the same in the fire of the sun, that the woman may be cloathed with the sun, and become a sun, and thereby rule over the moon ; that is.

is to say, that he may get the moon under his feet.—Now this here Elixir, sold for no more than six-pence a vial, contains the essence of the alkahest, the archæus, the catholicon, the menstruum, the sun, moon, and to sum up all in one word, is the true, genuine, unadulterated, unchangeable, immaculate and specific *cbruseon pepuromenon ek puros.*”

The audience were variously affected by this learned oration: some of those who favoured the pretensions of the whig candidate, were of opinion that he ought to be punished for his presumption in reflecting so scurrilously on ministers and measures. Of this sentiment was our adventurer, though he could not help admiring the courage of the orator, and owning within himself, that he had mixed some melancholy truths with his scurrility. Mr. Ferret would not have stood so long in his rostrum unmolested, had not he cunningly chosen his station immediately without the jurisdiction of the town, whose magistrates therefore

therefore could not take cognizance of his conduct ; but application was made to the constable of the other parish, while our nostrum-monger proceeded in his speech, the conclusion of which produced such an effect upon his hearers, that his whole cargo was immediately exhausted. He had just stepped down from his stool, when the constable, with his staff, arrived, and took him under his guidance. Mr. Ferret, on this occasion, attempted to interest the people in his behalf, by exhorting them to vindicate the liberty of the subject, against such an act of oppression ; but finding them deaf to the tropes and figures of his elocution, he addressed himself to our knight, reminding him of his duty to protect the helpless and the injured, and earnestly soliciting his interposition.

Sir Launcelot, without making the least reply to his entreaties, resolved to see the end of this adventure ; and being joined by his squire, followed the prisoner at a distance, measuring back the ground he had travelled

travelled the day before, until he reached another small borough, where Ferret was housed in the common prison. While he sat a-horseback, deliberating on the next step he should take, he was accosted by the voice of Tom Clarke, who called in a whimpering tone, through a window grated with iron, "For the love of God! Sir Launcelot, do, dear Sir, be so good as to take the trouble to alight and come upstairs—I have something to communicate of consequence to the community in general, and you in particular—Pray, do, dear Sir Knight. I beg a boon in the name of St. Michael and St. George for England.

Our adventurer, not a little surprised at this address, dismounted without hesitation, and being admitted to the common jail, there found not only his old friend Tom, but also the uncle, sitting on a bench with a woollen night-cap on his head, and a pair of spectacles on his nose, reading very earnestly in a book, which he afterwards understood.

derstood was intituled the, "The Life and Adventures of Valentine and Orson." The captain no sooner saw his great pattern enter, than he rose and received him with the salutation of "What cheer, brother?" and before the knight could answer, added these words : " You see how the land lies—here have Tom and I been fast a-shore these four and twenty hours ; and this berth we have got by attempting to tow your galley, brother, from the enemy's harbour. Adds bobs ! if we had this here fellow whoreson for a consort, with all our tackle in order, brother, we'd soon shew 'em the topsail, slip our cable, and down with their barricadoes. But, howsoever, it don't signify talking—patience is a good stream-anchor, and will hold, as the saying is—but, damn my—as for the matter of my boltsprit.—Hearkye, hearkye, brother, damn'd hard to engage with three at a time, one upon my bow, one upon my quarter, and one right a-head, rubbing, and drubbing, lying athwart

thwart hawse, raking fore and aft, battering and grappling, and lashing and clashing—adds heart, brother ; crash went the boltsprit—down came the round-top—up with the dead lights—I saw nothing but the stars at noon, lost the helm of my seven senses, and down I broached upon my broadside.”—

As Mr. Clarke rightly conceived that his uncle would need an interpreter, he began to explain these hints by giving a circumstantial detail of his own and the captain’s disaster. He told Sir Launcelot, that notwithstanding all his persuasion and remonstrances, captain Crowe insisted upon appearing in the character of a knight-errant; and with that view had set out from the public-house on the morning that succeeded his vigil in the church: that upon the highway they had met with a coach, containing two ladies, one of whom seemed to be under great agitation; for, as they passed, she struggled with the other, thrust out her head at the window, and said something

thing which he could not distinctly hear ; that captain Crowe was struck with admiration of her unequalled beauty ; and he, (Tom) no sooner informed him who she was, than he resolved to set her at liberty, on the supposition that she was under restraint and in distress : that he accordingly unsheathed his cutlass, and riding back after the coach, commanded the driver to bring to, on pain of death : that one of the servants believing the captain to be an highwayman, presented a blunderbus, and in all probability would have shot him on the spot, had not he (the nephew) rode up and assured them the gentleman was *non compos* : that notwithstanding his intimation, all the three attacked him with the butt ends of their horse-whips, while the coach drove on, and although he laid about him with great fury, at last brought him to the ground by a stroke on the temple : that Mr. Clarke himself then interposed in defence of his kinsman, and was also severely beaten : that two of the servants, upon application

application to a justice of the peace, residing near the field of battle, had granted a warrant against the captain and his nephew, and without examination, committed them as idle vagrants, after having seized their horses and their money, on pretence of their being suspected for highwaymen. " But, as there was no just cause of suspicion, (added he) I am of opinion, the justice is guilty of a trespass, and may be sued for *falsum imprisonamentum*, and considerable damages obtained ; for you will please to observe, Sir, no justice has a right to commit any person 'till after due examination ; besides, we were not committed for an assault and battery, *audita querela*, nor as wandering lunatics by the statute, who, to be sure, may be apprehended by a justice's warrant, and locked up and chained, if necessary, or to be sent to their last legal settlement : but we were committed as vagrants and suspected highwaymen. Now we do not fall under the description of vagrants ; nor did any circum-

cumstance appear to support the suspicion of robbery; for to constitute robbery, there must be something taken; but here nothing was taken but blows, and they were upon compulsion: even an attempt to rob, without any taking, is not felony, but a misdemeanor. To be sure there is a taking in deed, and a taking in law: but still the robber must be in possession of a thing stolen; and we attempted to steal ourselves away——My uncle indeed would have released the young lady *vi et armis*, had his strength been equal to his inclination; and in so doing, I would have willingly lent my assistance, both from a desire to serve such a beautiful young creature, and also in regard to your honour, for I thought I heard her call upon your name”——

“ Ha! how! what! whose name? say, speak——heaven and earth!” (cried the Knight, with marks of the most violent emotion.) Clarke terrified at his looks, replied, “ I beg your pardon a thousand times;

times; I did not say positively she did speak those words: but I apprehended she did speak them. Words, which may be taken or interpreted by law in general, or common sense, ought not to receive a strained, or unusual construction; and ambiguous words"—“ Speak, or be dumb for ever! (exclaimed Sir Launcelot in a terrific tone, laying his hand on his sword) what young lady, ha! What name did she call upon?” Clarke falling on his knees, answered, not without stammering, “ Miss Aurelia Darnel; to the best of my recollection, she called upon Sir Launcelot Greaves.” “ Sacred powers! (cried our adventurer) which way did the carriage proceed?”

When Tom told him that the coach quitted the post-road, and struck away to the right at full speed, Sir Launcelot was seized with a pensive fit; his head sunk upon his breast, and he mused in silence for several minutes, with the most melancholy expression on his countenance: then recollect-

collecting himself, he assumed a more composed and cheerful air, and asked several questions with respect to the arms on the coach, and the liveries worn by the servants. It was in the course of this interrogation, that he discovered he had actually conversed with one of the footmen, who had brought back Crabshaw's horse: a circumstance that filled him with anxiety and chagrin, as he had omitted to inquire the name of his master, and the place to which the coach was travelling; though, in all probability, had he made these inquiries, he would have received very little satisfaction, there being reason to think the servants were enjoined secrecy. The knight, in order to meditate on this unexpected adventure, sat down by his old friend, and entered into a reverie, which lasted about a quarter of an hour, and might have continued longer, had it not been interrupted by the voice of Crabshaw, who bawled aloud, "Look to it, my masters—as you brew you must drink—this shall be a dear

216 THE ADVENTURES OF

day's work to some of you, for my part I say nothing—the braying ass eats a little grass—one barber shaves not so close but another finds a few stubble—you wanted to catch a capon, and you've stole a cat. He that takes up his lodgings in a stable, must be contented to lie upon litter.—”

The knight, desirous of knowing the cause that prompted Timothy to apothegmatize in this manner, looked through the grate, and perceived the squire fairly set in the stocks, surrounded by a mob of people. When he called to him, and asked the reason of this disgraceful restraint, Crabshaw replied, “ There's no cake, but there's another of the same make—who never climbed never fell—after clouds comes clear weather. 'Tis all long of your honour I've met with this preferment: no deservings of my own, but the interest of my master. Sir knight, if you will flay the justice, hang the constable, release your squire, and burn the town,

your

your name will be famous in story : but, if you are content, I am thankful. Two hours are soon spent in such good company ; in the mean time look to'un jailor, there's a frog in the stocks."

Sir Launcelot, incensed at this affront offered to his servant, advanced to the prison door, but found it fast locked, and when he called to the turnkey, he was given to understand that he himself was prisoner. Enraged at this intimation, he demanded at whose suit ; and was answered through the wicket, " At the suit of the king, in whose name I will hold you fast, with God's assistance."

The knight's looks now began to lighten, he rolled his eyes around, and snatching up an oaken bench, which three ordinary men could scarce have lifted from the ground, he, in all likelihood, would have shattered the door in pieces, had not he been restrained by the interposition of Mr. Clarke, who intreated him to have a little patience, assuring him he would suggest a

258 THE ADVENTURES OF

plan that would avenge him amply on the justice, without any breach of the peace. “ I say the justice (added Tom) because it must be his doing.—He is a little petulant sort of a fellow, ignorant of the law, guilty of numberless irregularities ; and, if properly managed, may for this here act of arbitrary power, be not only cast in a swinging sum, but even turned out of the commission with disgrace.—”

This was a very seasonable hint, in consequence of which the bench was softly replaced, and captain Crowe deposited the poker, with which he had armed himself to second the efforts of Sir Launcelot. They now, for the first time, perceived that Ferret had disappeared ; and, upon inquiry, found that he was in fact the occasion of the knight’s detention and the squire’s disgrace.

C H A P.

C H A P. XI.

Description of a modern Magistrate.

BEFORE the knight would take any resolution for extricating himself from his present embarrassment, he desired to be better acquainted with the character and circumstances of the justice by whom he had been confined, and likewise to understand the meaning of his own detention. To be informed in this last particular, he renewed his dialogue with the turnkey, who told him, through the grate, that Ferret no sooner perceived him in the jail, without his offensive arms, which he had left below, than he desired to be carried before the justice, where he had given information against the knight, as a violator of the public peace, who strolled about the country with unlawful arms, rendering the highways unsafe, encroaching upon the freedom of elections, putting his majeſ-

try's liege subjects in fear of their lives, and, in all probability, harbouring more dangerous designs under an affected cloak of lunacy. Ferret, upon this information, had been released, and entertained as an evidence for the king; and Crabshaw was put in the stocks, as an idle stroller.

Sir Launcelot, being satisfied in these particulars, addressed himself to his fellow prisoners, and begged they would communicate what they knew respecting the worthy magistrate, who had been so premature in the execution of his office. This request was no sooner signified than a crew of naked wretches crowded around him, and, like a congregation of rooks, opened their throats all at once, in accusation of justice Gobble. The knight was moved at this scene, which he could not help comparing, in his own mind, to what would appear upon a much more awful occasion, when the cries of the widow and the orphan, the injured and oppressed, would be uttered at the tribunal of an unerring

SIR LAUNCELOT GREAVES. ~~xxv~~

unerring Judge against the villainous and insolent authors of their calamity.

When he had, with some difficulty, quieted their clamours, and confined his interrogation to one person of a tolerably decent appearance, he learned that justice Gobble, whose father was a taylor, had for some time served as a journeyman hosiier in London, where he had picked up some law-terms, by conversing with hackney-writers and attorneys clerks of the lowest order; that, upon the death of his master, he had insinuated himself into the good graces of the widow, who took him for her husband, so that he became a person of some consideration, and saved money apace; that his pride, increasing with his substance, was reinforced by the vanity of his wife, who persuaded him to retire from business, that they might live genteelly in the country; that his father dying, and leaving a couple of houses in this town, Mr. Gobble had come down with his lady to take possession, and liked the

222 THE ADVENTURES OF

place so well as to make a more considerable purchase in the neighbourhood; that a certain peer being indebted to him in the large way of his business, and either unwilling or unable to pay the money, had compounded the debt, by inserting his name in the commission; since which period his own insolence, and his wife's ostentation, had exceeded all bounds: that, in the exertion of his authority, he had committed a thousand acts of cruelty and injustice against the poorer sort of people, who were unable to call him to a proper account: that his wife domineered with a more ridiculous though less pernicious usurpation, among the females of the place: that, in a word, she was the subject of continual mirth, and he the object of universal detestation. Our adventurer, though extremely well disposed to believe what was said to the prejudice of Gobble, would not give entire credit to this description, without first inquiring into the particulars of his conduct. He therefore

therefore asked the speaker, what was the cause of his particular complaint. "For my own part, Sir, (said he) I lived in repute, and kept a shop in this here town, well furnished with a great variety of articles. All the people in the place were my customers; but what I and many others chiefly depended upon, was the extraordinary sale at two annual customary fairs, to which all the country people in the neighbourhood resorted to lay out their money. I had employed all my stock, and even engaged my credit to procure a large assortment of goods for the Lammas-market: but having given my vote, in the election of a vestry-clerk, contrary to the interest of justice Gobble, he resolved to work my ruin. He suppressed the annual fairs, by which a great many people, especially publicans, earned the best part of their subsistence. The country people resorted to another town. I was overstocked with a load of perishable commodities; and found myself deprived of the best part of

my home customers by the ill-nature and revenge of the justice, who employed all his influence among the common people, making use of threats and promises, to make them desert my shop, and give their custom to another person, whom he settled in the same business under my nose. Being thus disabled from making punctual payments, my commodities spoiling, and my wife breaking her heart, I grew negligent and careless, took to drinking, and my affairs went to wreck. Being one day in liquor, and provoked by the fleers and taunts of the man who had set up against me, I struck him at his own door; upon which I was carried before the justice, who treated me with such insolence, that I became desperate, and not only abused him in the execution of his office, but also made an attempt to lay violent hands upon his person. You know, Sir, when a man is both drunk and desperate, he cannot be supposed to have any command of himself. I was sent hither to jail. My creditors

SIR LAUNCELOT GREAVES.

creditors immediately seized my effects; and, as they were not sufficient to discharge my debts, a statute of bankruptcy was taken out against me: so that here I must lie, until they think proper to sign my certificate, or the parliament shall please to pass an act for the relief of insolvent debtors."

The next person who presented himself in the crowd of accusers was a meagre figure, with a green apron, who told the knight that he had kept a public house in town for a dozen years, and enjoyed a good trade, which was in a great measure owing to a skittle-ground, in which the best people of the place diverted themselves occasionally: that justice Gobble, being disengaged at his refusing to part with a gelding which he had bred for his own use, first of all shut up the skittle-ground; but finding the publican still kept his house open, he took care that he should be deprived of his licence, on pretence that the number of ale-houses was too great,

THE ADVENTURES OF

and that this man had been bred to another employment. The poor publican, being thus deprived of his bread, was obliged to try the stay-making business, to which he had served an apprenticeship: but being very ill-qualified for this profession, he soon fell to decay, and contracted debts, in consequence of which he was now in prison, where he had no other support but what arose from the labour of his wife, who had gone to service.

The next prisoner who preferred his complaint against the unrighteous judge was a poacher, at whose practises justice Gobble had for some years connived, so as even to screen him from punishment, in consideration of being supplied with game gratis, till at length he was disappointed by accident. His lady had invited guests to an entertainment, and bespoke a hare, which the poacher undertook to furnish. He laid his snares accordingly overnight; but they were discovered, and taken away by the game-keeper of the gentleman to whom the ground

ground belonged. All the excuses the poacher could make proved ineffectual in appeasing the resentment of the justice and his wife, at being thus disconcerted. Measures were taken to detect the delinquent in the exercise of his illicit occupation: he was committed to safe custody: and his wife, with five bantlings, was passed to her husband's settlement in a different part of the country.

A stout squat fellow, rattling with chains, had just taken up the ball of accusation, when Sir Launcelot was startled with the appearance of a woman, whose looks and equipage indicated the most piteous distress. She seemed to be turned of the middle age, was of a lofty carriage, tall, thin, weather-beaten, and wretchedly attired: her eyes were inflamed with weeping, and her looks displayed that wildness and peculiarity which denote distraction. Advancing to Sir Launcelot, she fell upon her knees, and clasping her hands together,

uttered the following rhapsody in the most vehement tone of affliction :

“ Thrice potent, generous, and august emperor, here let my knees cleave to the earth, until thou shalt do me justice on that inhuman caitiff Gobble. Let him disgorge my substance which he hath devoured : let him restore to my widowed arms my child, my boy, the delight of my eyes, the prop of my life, the staff of my sustenance, whom he hath torn from my embrace, stolen, betrayed, sent into captivity, and murdered !—Behold these bleeding wounds upon his lovely breast ! see how they mangle his lifeless corse ! Horror ! give me my child, barbarians ! his head shall lie upon his Suky’s bosom——she will embalm him with her tears.—Ha ! plunge him in the deep ! shall my boy then float in a watery tomb !—Justice, most mighty emperor ! justice upon the villain who hath ruined us all !—May heaven’s dreadful vengeance overtake him ! may the keen storm of adversity strip him
of

of all his leaves and fruit ! may peace forsake his mind, and rest be banished from his pillow, so that all his days shall be filled with reproach and sorrow ; and all his nights be haunted with horror and remorse ! may he be stung by jealousy without cause, and maddened by revenge without the means of execution ! may all his offspring be blighted and consumed, like the mildewed ears of corn, except one that shall grow up to curse his old age, and bring his hoary head with sorrow to the grave, as he himself has proved a curse to me and mine !”

The rest of the prisoners, perceiving the knight extremely shocked at her misery and horrid imprecation, removed her by force from his presence, and conveyed her to another room ; while our adventurer underwent a violent agitation, and could not for some minutes compose himself so well as to inquire into the nature of this wretched creature’s calamity. The shop-keeper, of whom he demanded this satisfaction,

faction, gave him to understand that she was born a gentlewoman, and had been well educated: that she married a curate, who did not long survive his nuptials; and afterwards became the wife of one Oakley, a farmer, in opulent circumstances: that, after twenty years cohabitation with her husband, he sustained such losses by the distemper among the cattle, as he could not repair; and that this reverse of fortune was supposed to have hastened his death: that the widow, being a woman of spirit, determined to keep up and manage the farm, with the assistance of an only son, a very promising youth, who was already contracted in marriage with the daughter of another wealthy farmer. Thus the mother had a prospect of retrieving the affairs of her family, when all her hopes were dashed and destroyed by a ridiculous pique which Mrs. Gobble conceived against the young farmer's sweet-heart, Mrs. Susan Sedgemoor. This young woman chancing to be at a country assembly,

where

where the grave-digger of the parish acted as master of the ceremonies, was called out to dance before Miss Gobble, who happened to be there present also with her mother. The circumstance was construed into an unpardonable affront by the justice's lady, who abused the director, in the most opprobrious terms, for his insolence and ill-manners; and, retiring in a storm of passion, vowed revenge against the saucy minx who had presumed to vie in gentility with Miss Gobble. The justice entered into her resentment. The grave-digger lost his place; and Suky's lover, young Oakly, was pressed for a soldier. Before his mother could take any steps for his discharge, he was hurried away to the East-Indies, by the industry and contrivance of the justice. Poor Suky wept and pined until she fell into a consumption. The forlorn widow, being thus deprived of her son, was overwhelmed with grief to such a degree, that she could no longer manage her concerns. Every thing went backward;

she

she ran in arrears with her landlord, and the prospect of bankruptcy aggravated her affliction, while it added to her incapacity. In the midst of these disastrous circumstances, news arrived that her son Greaves had lost his life in a sea-engagement with the enemy, and these tidings almost instantly deprived her of her reason. Then the landlord seized for his rent; and she was arrested at the suit of justice Gobble, who had bought up one of her debts, in order to distress her, and now pretended that her madness was feigned.

When the name of Greaves was mentioned, our adventurer started, and changed colour; and, now the story was ended, asked, with marks of eager emotion, if the name of the woman's first husband was not Wilford. When the prisoner answered in the affirmative, he rose up, and striking his breast, "Good heaven! (cried he) the very woman who watched over my infancy, and even nourished me with her milk!—She was my mother's humble friend!

friend.—Alas ! poor Dorothy ! how would your old mistress grieve to see her favourite in this miserable condition !” While he pronounced these words, to the astonishment of the hearers, a tear stole softly down each cheek. Then he desired to know if the poor lunatic had any intervals of reason ; and was given to understand, that she was always quiet, and generally supposed to have the use of her senses, except when she was disturbed by some extraordinary noise, or when any person touched upon her misfortune, or mentioned the name of her oppressor, in all of which cases she started out into extravagance and frenzy. They likewise imputed great part of the disorder to the want of quiet, proper food, and necessaries, with which she was but poorly supplied by the cold hand of chance-charity.

Our adventurer was exceedingly affected by the distress of this woman, whom he resolved to relieve ; and in proportion as his commiseration was excited, his resentment rose against the miscreant, who seemed to have

have insinuated himself into the commission of the peace on purpose to harass and oppress his fellow-creatures. Thus animated, he entered into consultation with Mr. Thomas Clarke concerning the steps he should take, first for their deliverance, and then for prosecuting and punishing the justice. In result of this conference, the knight called aloud for the jailor, and demanded to see a copy of his commitment, that he might know the cause of his imprisonment, and offer bail; or, in case that should be refused, move for a writ of Habeas Corpus. The jailor told him the copy of the writ should be forthcoming; but after he had waited some time, and repeated the demand before witnesses, it was not yet produced. Mr. Clarke then, in a solemn tone, gave the jailor to understand, that an officer, refusing to deliver a true copy of the commitment-warrant, was liable to the forfeiture of one hundred pounds for the first offence; and for the second to a forfeiture of twice that sum,

fum, besides being disabled from executing his office.

Indeed, it was no easy matter to comply with Sir Launcelot's demand ; for no warrant had been granted, nor was it now in the power of the justice to remedy this defect, as Mr. Ferret had taken himself away privately, without having communicated the name and designation of the prisoner. A circumstance the more mortifying to the jailor, as he perceived the extraordinary respect which Mr. Clarke and the captain payed to the knight, and was now fully convinced that he would be dealt with according to law. Disordered with these reflexions, he imparted them to the justice, who had in vain caused search to be made for Ferret, and was now extremely well inclined to set the knight and his friends at liberty, though he did not at all suspect the quality and importance of our adventurer. He could not, however, resist the temptation of displaying the authority of his office ; and therefore ordered the prisoners to be

be brought before his tribunal, that, in the capacity of a magistrate, he might give them a severe reproof, and proper caution, with regard to their future behaviour.

They were accordingly led through the street in procession, guarded by the constable and his gang, followed by Crabshaw, who had by this time been released from the stocks, and surrounded by a crowd of people, attracted by curiosity. When they arrived at the justice's house, they were detained for some time in the passage; then a voice was heard, commanding the constable to bring in the prisoners, and they were introduced to the hall of audience, where Mr. Gobble sat in judgment, with a crimson velvet night-cap on his head; and on his right hand appeared his lady, puffed up with the pride and insolence of her husband's office, fat, frowzy, and not over-clean, well stricken in years, without the least vestige of an agreeable feature, having a rubicond nose, ferret eyes, and imperious aspect. The justice himself was

a lit-

a little, affected, pert prig, who endeavoured to solemnize his countenance by assuming an air of consequence, in which pride, impudence, and folly were strangely blended. He aspired at nothing so much as the character of an able spokesman ; and took all opportunities of holding forth at vestry and quarter-sessions, as well as in the administration of his office in private. He would not, therefore, let slip this occasion of exciting the admiration of his hearers, and, in an authoritative tone, thus address'd our adventurer :

“ The laws of this land has provided— I says, as how provision is made by the laws of this here land, in reverence to delinquents and manefactors, whereby the king's peace is upholden by we magistrates, who represents his majesty's person, better than in e'er a contagious nation under the sun : but, howsoemever, that there king's peace, and this here magistrate's authority, cannot be adequately and identically upheld, if so be as how criminals escapes unpunished.

ed. Now, friend, you must be confiden-
tious in your own mind, as you are a no-
torious criminal, who have trespassed again
the laws on divers occasions and importu-
nities; if I had a mind to exercise the ri-
gour of the law, according to the authority
wherewith I am vested, you and your com-
panions in iniquity would be severely pu-
nished by the statue: but we magistrates
has a power to litigate the severity of jus-
tice, and so I am contented that you
should be mercifully dealt withal, and even
dismissed."

To this harangue the knight replied,
with solemn and deliberate accent, " If I
understand your meaning aright, I am ac-
cused of being a notorious criminal; but
nevertheless you are contented to let me ef-
cape with impunity. If I am a notorious
criminal, it is the duty of you, as a magis-
trate, to bring me to condign punishment;
and if you allow a criminal to escape unpun-
ished, you are not only unworthy of a
place in the commission, but become ac-
cessary

cessary to his guilt, and, to all intents and purposes, *socius criminis*. With respect to your proffered mercy, I shall decline the favour; nor do I deserve any indulgence at your hands: for, depend upon it, I shall shew no mercy to you, in the steps I intend to take for bringing you to justice. I understand that you have been long hakeneyed in the ways of oppression, and I have seen some living monuments of your inhumanity—of that hereafter. I myself have been detained in prison, without cause assigned. I have been treated with indignity, and insulted by jailors and constables, led thro' the streets like a felon, as a spectacle to the multitude, obliged to dance attendance in your passage, and afterwards brandished with the name of notorious criminal.—I now demand to see the information in consequence of which I was detained in prison, the copy of the warrant of commitment, or detainer, and the face of the person by whom I was accused. I insist upon a compliance with these demands, as the privileges of a

British

240 THE ADVENTURES OF

British subject ; and if it is refused, I shall seek redress before a higher tribunal."

The justice seemed to be not a little disturbed at this peremptory declaration ; which, however, had no other effect upon his wife, but that of enraging her choler, and inflaming her countenance. " Sirrah ! sirrah ! (cried she) do you dares to insult a worshipful magistrate on the bench ?— Can you deny that you are a vagram, and a dilatory sort of a person ? Han't the man with the satchel made an affidavy of it ?— If I was my husband, I'd lay you fast by the heels for your resumption, and ferk you with a primineery into the bargain, unless you could give a better account of yourself—I would."

Gobble, encouraged by this fillip, resumed his petulance, and proceeded in this manner :—" Heark ye, friend, I might, as Mrs. Gobble very justly observes, trounce you for your audaceous behaviour ; but I scorn to take such advantages : howsoever, I shall make you give an account
of

of yourself and your companions ; for I believes as how you are in a gang, and all in a story, and perhaps you may be found one day in a cord.—What are you, friend ? What is your station and degree ?” “ I am a gentleman,” replied the knight, “ Ay, that is English for a sorry fellow, (said the justice.) Every idle vagabond, who has neither home nor habitation, trade nor profession, designs himself a gentleman. But I must know how you live ?” “ Upon my means.” “ What are your means ?” —“ My estate.”—“ Whence doth it arise ?” “ From inheritance.” “ Your estate lies in brass, and that you have inherited from nature : but do you inherit lands and tene- ments ?” “ Yes.” “ But they are nei- ther here nor there, I doubt.—Come, come, friend, I shall bring you about pre- fently.” Here the examination was inter- rupted by the arrival of Mr. Fillet the sur- geon, who chancing to pass, and seeing a crowd about the door, went in to satisfy his curiosity.

C H A P. XII.

Which shews there are more ways to kill a dog than hanging.

MR. Fillet no sooner appeared in the judgment-chamber of justice Gobble than captain Crowe, seizing him by the hand, exclaimed, "Body o'me! Doctor, thou'rt come up in the nick of time to lend us a hand in putting about.—We're a little in the stays here—but howsomever we've got a good pilot, who knows the coast, and can weather the point, as the saying is. As for the enemy's vessel, she has had a shot or two already a-thwart her fore-foot: the next, I do suppose, will strike the hull, and then you'll see her taken all a-back." The doctor, who perfectly understood his dialect, assured him he might depend upon his assistance; and advancing to the knight, accosted him in these words: "Sir Launcelot Greaves,

SIR LAUNCELOT GREAVES. 243

your most humble servant.—When I saw a crowd at the door, I little thought of finding you within, treated with such indig-nity.—Yet I can't help being pleased with an opportunity of proving the esteem and veneration I have for your person and cha-racter :—you will do me a particular plea-sure in commanding my best services.”

Our adventurer thanked him for this in-stance of his friendship, which he told him he would use without hesitation; and de-sired he would procure immediate bail for him and his two friends, who had been imprisoned, contrary to law, without any cause assigned. During this short dialogue, the justice, who had heard of Sir Launce-lot's family and fortune, though an utter stranger to his person, was seized with such pangs of terror and compunction, as a gro-velling mind may be supposed to have felt in such circumstances ; and they seemed to produce the same unsavoury effects that are so humorously delineated by the inimi-table Hogarth in the print of *Felix on his*

tribunal, done in the Dutch stile. Nevertheless, seeing Fillet retire to execute the knight's commands, he recollect^{ed} himself so far as to tell the prisoners there was no occasion to give themselves any further trouble; for he would release them without bail or mainprize. Then discarding all the insolence from his features, and assuming an aspect of the most humble adulation, he begged the knight ten thousand pardons for the freedoms he had taken, which were entirely owing to his ignorance of Sir Launcelot's quality. "Yes, I'll assure you, Sir, (said the wife), my husband would have bit off his tongue, rather than say black is the white of your eye, if so be he had known your capacity.—Thank God, we have been used to deal with gentlefolks, and many's the good pound we have lost by them; but what of that? Sure we know how to behave to our betters. Mr. Gobble, thanks be to God, can defy the whole world to prove that he ever said an uncivil word, or did a rude thing to a gentleman,
know-

knowing him to be a person of fortune. Indeed, as to your poor gentry and riff-raff, your tag, rag, and bobtail, or such vulgar scoundrelly people, he has always behaved like a magistrate, and treated them with the rigger of authority." "In other words (said the knight), he has tyrannized over the poor, and connived at the vices of the rich: your husband is little obliged to you for this confession, woman." "Woman! (cried Mrs. Gobble, impurpled with wrath, and fixing her hands on her sides by way of defiance) I scorn your words.—Marry come up, woman! quotha: no more a woman than your worship." Then bursting into tears, "Husband (continued she), if you had the soul of a louse, you would not suffer me to be abused at this rate: you would not sit still on the bench, and hear your spouse called such contemptible epitaphs.—Who cares for his title and his knighthood? You and I husband, knew a taylor that was made a knight: but, thank God, I have noblemen to stand by me, with their privileges and beroguetifs."

At this instant Mr. Fillet returned with his friend, a practitioner in the law, who freely offered to join in bailing our adventurer, and the other two prisoners, for any sum that should be required. The justice, perceiving the affair began to grow more and more serious, declared that he would discharge the warrants and dismiss the prisoners. Here Mr Clarke interposing, observed, that against the knight no warrant had been granted, nor any information sworn to; consequently, as the justice had not complied with the form of proceeding directed by statute, the imprisonment was *coram non judice*, void. "Right, Sir (said the other lawyer), if a justice commits a felon for trial, without binding over the prosecutor to the assizes, he shall be fined." — "And again (cried Clarke), if a justice issues a warrant for commitment, where there is no accusation, action will lie against the justice." "Moreover (replied the stranger), if a justice of peace is guilty of any misdemeanour in his office, information lies against him in *Banco Regis*, where he

he shall be punished by fine and imprisonment." " And besides, (resumed the accurate Tom), the same court will grant an information against a justice of peace, on motion, for sending even a servant to the house of correction, or common jail, without sufficient cause." " True ! (exclaimed the other limb of the law) and, for contempt of law, attachment may be had against justices of peace in *Banco Regis*. A justice of the peace was fined a thousand marks for corrupt practices." With these words advancing to Mr. Clarke, he shook him by the hand, with the appellation of Brother, saying, " I doubt the justice has got into a cursed hovel." Mr. Gobble himself seemed to be of the same opinion. He changed colour several times during the remarks which the lawyers had made ; and now, declaring that the gentlemen were at liberty, begged, in the most humble phrase, that the company would eat a bit of mutton with him, and after dinner the affair might be amicably compromised."

To this proposal our adventurer replied, in a grave and resolute tone, " If your acting in the commission as a justice of the peace concerned my own particular only, perhaps I should waive any further inquiry, and resent your insolence no other way but by silent contempt. If I thought the errors of your administration proceeded from a good intention, defeated by want of understanding, I should pity your ignorance, and, in compassion, advise you to desist from acting a part for which you are so ill qualified: but the preposterous conduct of such a man deeply affects the interest of the community, especially that part of it which, from its helpless situation, is the more entitled to our protection and assistance. I am moreover convinced, that your misconduct is not so much the consequence of an uninformed head, as the poisonous issue of a malignant heart, devoid of humanity, inflamed with pride, and rankling with revenge. The common prison of this little town is filled with the miserable objects of your cru-

cruelty and oppression. Instead of protecting the helpless, restraining the hands of violence, preserving the public tranquillity, and acting as a father to the poor, according to the intent and meaning of that institution of which you are an unworthy member, you have distressed the widow and the orphan, given a loose to all the insolence of office, embroiled your neighbours by fomenting suits and animosities, and played the tyrant among the indigent and forlorn. You have abused the authority with which you were invested, intailed a reproach upon your office, and, instead of being revered as a blessing, you are detested as a curse among your fellow creatures. This, indeed, is generally the case of low fellows, who are thrust into the magistracy without sentiment, education, or capacity. Among other instances of your iniquity, there is now in prison an unhappy woman, infinitely your superior in the advantages of birth, sense, and education, whom you have,

even without provocation, persecuted to ruin and distraction, after having illegally and inhumanly kidnapped her only child, and exposed him to violent death in a foreign land. Ah caitiff ! if you were to forego all the comforts of life, distribute your means among the poor, and do the severest penance that ever priestcraft prescribed, for the rest of your days, you could not atone for the ruin of that hapless family ; a family through whose sides you cruelly and perfidiously stabbed the heart of an innocent young woman, to gratify the pride and diabolical malice of that wretched low-bred woman, who now sits at your right hand as the associate of power and presumption. Oh ! if such a despicable reptile shall annoy mankind with impunity ; if such a contemptible miscreant shall have it in his power to do such deeds of inhumanity and oppression, what avails the law ? Where is our admired constitution, the freedom, the security of the subject, the boasted humanity of the British nation ?

Sacred heaven ! if there was no human institution to take cognizance of such atrocious crimes, I would listen to the dictates of eternal justice, and, arming myself with the right of nature, exterminate such villains from the face of the earth !”

These last words he pronounced in such a strain, while his eyes lightened with indignation, that Gobble and his wife underwent the most violent agitation ; the constable’s teeth chattered in his head, the jailor trembled, and the whole audience was overwhelmed with consternation.

After a short pause, Sir Launcelot proceeded in a milder strain : “ Thank heaven the laws of this country have exempted me from the disagreeable task of such an execution. To them we shall have immediate recourse, in three separate actions against you for false imprisonment ; and any other person who has been injured by your arbitrary and wicked proceedings, in me shall find a warm protector, until you shall be expunged from the commission

with disgrace, and have made such retaliation as your circumstances will allow for the wrongs you have done the community."

In order to complete the mortification and terror of the justice, the lawyer, whose name was Fenton, declared, that to his certain knowledge, these actions would be reinforced with divers prosecutions for corrupt practices, which had lain dormant until some person of courage and influence should take the lead against justice Gobble, who was the more dreaded as he acted under the patronage of lord Sharpington. By this time fear had deprived the justice and his helpmate of the faculty of speech. They were indeed almost petrified with dismay, and made no effort to speak, when Mr. Fillet, in the rear of the knight, as he retired with his company, took his leave of them in these words :

" And now, Mr. Justice, to dinner with what appetite you may." Our adventurer, though warmly invited to Mr. Fenton's house, repaired to a public inn, where he thought

thought he should be more at his ease, fully determined to punish and depose Gobble from his magistracy, to effect a general jail-delivery of all the debtors whom he had found in confinement; and, in particular, to rescue poor Mrs. Oakley from the miserable circumstances in which she was involved.

In the mean time, he insisted upon entertaining his friends at dinner, during which many fallies of sea-wit and good-humour passed between captain Crowe and doctor Fillet, which last had just returned from a neighbouring village, whither he was summoned to fish a man's yard-arm, which had snapt in the slings. Their enjoyment, however, was suddenly interrupted by a loud scream from the kitchen, whither Sir Launcelot immediately sprung, with equal eagerness and agility. There he saw the landlady, who was a woman in years, embracing a man dressed in a sailor's jacket, while she exclaimed, "It is thy own flesh and blood, so sure as I'm a living soul.

soul.—Ah! poor Greaves, poor Greaves, many a poor heart has grieved for thee!” To this salutation the youth replied, “I’m sorry for that, mistress.—How does poor mother? how does Sukey Sedgeimore?”

The good woman of the house could not help shedding tears at these interrogations; while Sir Launcelot, interposing, said, not without emotion, “I perceive you are the son of Mrs. Oakley.—Your mother is in a bad state of health; but in me you will find a real parent.” Perceiving that the young man eyed him with astonishment, he gave him to understand that his name was Launcelot Greaves.

Oakley no sooner heard these words pronounced, then he fell upon his knees, and seizing the knight’s hand, kissed it eagerly, crying, “God for ever bless your honour: I am your name-son, sure enough—but what of that? I can earn my bread, without being beholden to any man.”

When the knight raised him up, he turned to the woman of the house, saying,

“I

" I want to see mother. I'm afraid as how times are hard with her ; and I have saved some money for her use." This instance of filial duty brought tears into the eyes of our adventurer, who assured him his mother should be carefully attended, and want for nothing : but that it would be very improper to see her at present, as the surprize might shock her too much, considering that she believed him dead. " Ey, indeed, (cried the landlady) we are all of the same opinion, being as the report went that poor Greaves Oakley was killed in battle." " Lord mistress, (said Oakley) there wa'n't a word of truth in it, I'll assure you.—What, d'ye think I'd tell a lie about the matter ? Hurt I was, to be sure ; but that dont signify : we gave 'em as good as they brought, and so parted.—Well, if so be I can't see mother, I'll go and have some chat with Sukey. What d'ye look so glum for ? she an't married, is she ?" " No, no, (replied the woman) not married ; but almost heart-broken. Since thou

thou wast gone, she has done nothing but sighed, and wept, and pined herself into a decay. I'm afraid thou hast come too late to save her life."

Oakley's heart was not proof against this information: Bursting into tears, he exclaimed, "O my dear, sweet, gentle Sukey! Have I then lived to be the death of her whom I loved more than the whole world!" He would have gone instantly to her father's house; but was restrained by the knight and his company, who had now joined him in the kitchen. The young man was seated at table, and gave them to understand, that the ship to which he belonged having arrived in England, he was indulged with a month's leave to see his relations; and that he had received about fifty pounds in wages and prize-money. After dinner, just as they began to deliberate upon the measures to be taken against Gobble, that gentleman arrived at the inn, and humbly craved admittance. Mr. Fillet, struck

with

SIR LAUNCELOT GREAVES. 257

with a sudden idea, retired into another apartment with the young farmer ; while the justice, being admitted to the company, declared that he came to propose terms of accommodation. He accordingly offered to ask pardon of Sir Launcelot in the public papers, and pay fifty pounds to the poor of the parish, as an atonement for his misbehaviour, provided the knight and his friends would grant him a general release. Our adventurer told him, he would willingly wave all personal concessions ; but, as the case concerned the community, he insisted upon his leaving off acting in the commission, and making satisfaction to the parties he had injured and oppressed. This declaration introduced a discussion, in the course of which the justice's petulance began to revive ; when Fillet, entering the room, told them he had a reconciling measure to propose, if Mr. Gobble would for a few minutes withdraw. He rose up immediately, and was shewn into the room which

which Fillet had prepared for his reception. While he sat musing on this untoward adventure, so big with disgrace and disappointment, young Oakley, according to the instructions he had received, appeared all at once before him, pointing to a ghastly wound, which the doctor had painted on his forehead. The apparition no sooner presented itself to the eyes of Gobble, than, taking it for granted it was the spirit of the young farmer whose death he had occasioned, he roared aloud, "Lord have mercy upon us!" and fell insensible on the floor. There being found by the company, to whom Fillet had communicated his contrivance, he was conveyed to bed, where he lay some time before he recovered the perfect use of his senses. Then he earnestly desired to see the knight, and assured him he was ready to comply with his terms, inasmuch as he believed he had not long to live. Advantage was immediately taken of this salutary disposition. He bound himself not to act as a justice

justice of the peace, in any part of Great Britain, under the penalty of five thousand pounds. He burned Mrs. Oakley's note ; payed the debts of the shopkeeper ; undertook to compound those of the publican, and to settle him again in business ; and, finally, discharged them all from prison, paying the dues out of his own pocket. These steps being taken with peculiar eagerness, he was removed to his own house, where he assured his wife he had seen a vision that prognosticated his death ; and had immediate recourse to the curate of the parish for spiritual consolation.

The most interesting part of the task that now remained, was to make the widow Oakley acquainted with her good fortune, in such a manner as might least disturb her spirits, already but too much discomposed. For this purpose they chose the landlady, who, after having received proper directions how to regulate her conduct, visited her in prison that same evening.

ing. Finding her quite calm, and her reflection perfectly restored, she began with exhorting her to put her trust in Providence, which would never forsake the cause of the injured widow and fatherless: she promised to assist and befriend her on all occasions, as far as her abilities would reach: she gradually turned the conversation upon the family of the Greaves; and by degrees informed her, that Sir Launcelot, having learned her situation, was determined to extricate her from all her troubles. Perceiving her astonished, and deeply affected at this intimation, she artfully shifted the discourse, recommended resignation to the Divine Will, and observed, that this circumstance seemed to be an earnest of further happiness. “O! I’m incapable of receiving more! (cried the disconsolate widow, with streaming eyes)—Yet I ought not to be surprised at any blessing that flows from that quarter.—The family of Greaves were always virtuous, humane, and benevolent.—This young

young gentleman's mother was my dear lady and benefactress :—he himself was suckled at these breasts.—O ! he was the sweetest, comeliest, best conditioned babe ! —I loved not my own Greaves with greater affection—but, he, alas ! is now no more !” “ Have patience, good neighbour, (said the landlady of the White Heart) that is more than you have any right to affirm.—All that you know of the matter is by common report, and common report is commonly false : besides, I can tell you I have seen a list of the men that were killed in admiral P——’s ship, when he fought the French in the East Indies, and your son was not in the number.” To this intimation she replied, after a considerable pause, “ Don’t, my good neighbour, don’t feed me with false hope.—My poor Greaves too certainly perished in a foreign land—yet he is happy :—had he lived to see me in this condition, grief would soon have put a period to his days.” “ I tell you then, (cried the visitant) he is not dead.

dead. I have seen a letter that mentions his being well since the battle. You shall come along with me—you are no longer a prisoner, but shall live at my house comfortably, till your affairs are settled to your wish."

The poor widow followed her in silent astonishment, and was immediately accommodated with necessaries.

Next morning her hostess proceeded with her in the same cautious manner, until she was assured that her son had returned. Being duly prepared, she was blessed with a sight of poor Greaves, and fainted away in his arms.

We shall not dwell upon this tender scene, because it is but of a secondary concern in the history of our knight-errant: let it suffice to say, their mutual happiness was unspeakable. She was afterwards visited by Sir Launcelot, whom she no sooner beheld, than, springing forwards with all the eagerness of maternal affection, she clasped him to her breast, crying, "My dear

dear child ! my Launcelot ! my pride ! my darling ! my kind benefactor ! This is not the first time I have hugged you in these arms ! O ! you are the very image of Sir Everhard in his youth ; but you have got the eyes, the complexion, the sweetnes, and complacency of my dear and ever-honoured lady." This was not in the strain of hireling praise ; but the genuine tribute of esteem and admiration. As such, it could not but be agreeable to our hero, who undertook to procure Oakley's discharge, and settle him in a comfortable farm on his own estate.

In the mean time, Greaves went with a heavy heart to the house of farmer Sedge-more, where he found Sukey, who had been prepared for his reception, in a transport of joy, though very weak and greatly emaciated. Nevertheless, the return of her sweet-heart had such an happy effect on her constitution, that in a few weeks her health was perfectly restored.

This adventure of our knight was crowned with every happy circumstance
that

264 THE ADVENTURES OF

that could give pleasure to a generous mind. The prisoners were released, and reinstated in their former occupations. The justice performed his articles from fear; and afterwards turned over a new leaf from remorse. Young Oakley was married to Sukey, with whom he received a considerable portion. The new-married couple found a farm ready stocked for them on the knight's estate; and the mother enjoyed a happy retreat in the character of the house-keeper at Greavesbury-hall.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



